# *Saunterings in London*

## *With a Few Bars' Rest*

*A Sequestered City Haunt*

*By* Leopold Wagner

*Author of "A New Book about London"*
*"London Inns and Taverns," etc.*

*Illustrated*

In this work the author has striven to arouse and stimulate his readers' interest in those topographical features of the Great City which, considered in their proper relation to English Sociology, are not less alluring than the stately edifices cited in the Guide Books. The streets of London offer abundant facilities for refreshing one's memory with historical occurrences and departed worthies. The suggestions thus thrown out only need a link with printed matter to enable the average citizen to hold his own in conversation, if not actually to pass as a remarkably well-read person. While tavern signs loom large in the text, these are merely incidental to countless other objects that delight the eye of the antiquary.

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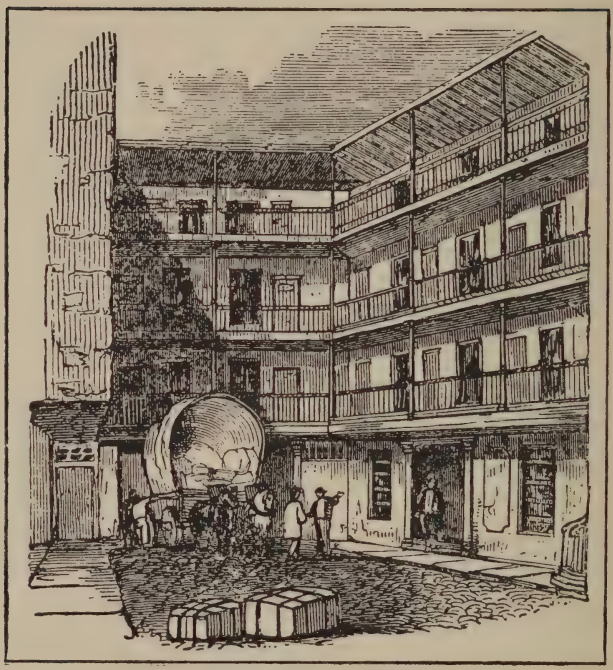
# SAUNTERINGS IN LONDON:

## WITH A FEW BARS' REST

## A FORGOTTEN CITY INN.



*THE SARACEN'S HEAD INN.*

*Reproduction from an illustration of the Saracen's Head Inn which appeared in "The Illustrated London News," Feb. 3, 1844, together with a paragraph announcing its "razing to the ground" and the erection of "large Manchester Warehouses."*

# SAUNTERINGS IN LONDON

## WITH A FEW BARS' REST

BY

LEOPOLD WAGNER

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# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

Minor topographical features of the Metropolis—The investigator's instinct—Memorials of departed worthies—Old-time attractions in Lombard Street—Baker's Chop House, Change Alley—Traders' and craftsmen's signs—Country inn signs—The educative character of tavern signs—Encaustic-tile paintings—"Converted" tavern curiosities—An ale-house used as a vicarage—A Haymarket memory of a sensational murder—A famous punch house—Real old-fashioned taverns—A link with hanging days in the Old Bailey—"Ye Olde Dutch Kitchen"—Benjamin Franklin in Bartholomew Close—"Church Ale" at the Coach and Horses—Locking up the Precinct of St. Bartholomew's Priory—Beneficial effects of the "Tied Houses System"—Improvements and reconstructions—Cabaret shows—Favourable portents of the revival of supper facilities at popular palaces of pleasure.

IN the following pages the author has striven to arouse and stimulate his readers' interest in those minor topographical features of the Great City which, considered in their proper relation to English sociology, are not less alluring than the historic edifices cited in the guide-books. Being himself of an observant turn of mind and endowed with an infinite capacity for inquiring into the full significance of things daily thrust upon the public view, he has often marvelled at the utter indifference shown by his fellow-men to objects that delight the eye of the antiquary.

The streets of London offer abundant facilities for refreshing one's memory with historical occurrences and departed worthies. The suggestions thus thrown out require only to be linked up with printed matter in the form of ordinary works of reference to enable the average citizen to hold his own in conversation, if not actually to pass as a remarkably well-read mortal. In this connection let it always be remembered that, so far from education ending with schooldays, the knowledge which strikes deepest is acquired unconsciously.

Take, for example, the plaques and tablets affixed to the sites of houses associated with the lives of famous men. Emulating the praiseworthy initiative of the Society of Arts and the London County Council round the Metropolis at large, the City Fathers have of late displayed a wondrous activity over labelling the precise locations of such celebrities' birthplaces and erstwhile residences, and even the social haunts best known to them. It therefore rests with one and all to be on the alert for their discovery. Mindful of the motto of Captain Cuttle, "When found, make a note of," both the humble wage-earner and the man of leisure may derive a peculiar satisfaction from studying what John Gay sought to inculcate by his mock-heroic poem, "Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London."

The nine facsimiles of the original goldsmiths' and mercers' signs, survivals of a dozen more specially set up in Lombard Street for the Coronation of Edward VII, should be dear to the heart of the occasionally encountered Londoner who loves to throw himself into the past. How much more picturesque, if not quite so festive of aspect, these at the time than the Venetian masts with shields and flags, as supports for the usual bunting signalizing the great event elsewhere!

In Change Alley, close at hand, an agreeable surprise would await the same cultured pedestrian. Appearing exactly as it did during the excitements of the South Sea Bubble, and when Gay, Swift, Arbuthnot, and the rest of a brilliant coterie of the lace and ruffle age used to dine well there and be chaired home after—to quote the words of the first-named—"a very full and very comfortable evening, both wit and wine bubbling, and, best of all, no 'head' in the morning," the frontage of Baker's Chop House, now incorporated in the rear portion of Martin's Bank, seems strangely out of keeping with its

modern surroundings. Though probably unheeded by citizens rushing by, two glass-covered stones at the Lombard Street entrance formerly proclaimed the cosy resort to be a "tavern, chop house, coffee house, and soup rooms"—an altogether composite feeding establishment. These have latterly vanished, but the inscription on the projecting corner wall inside, with a hand pointing downwards—"Baker's Chop House, No. 1, Change Alley, the oldest in London, established in the seventeenth century"—has been suffered to remain ; so, too, has the archaic lamp overhead. The two great bay-windows contain small glass panes, which after closing time were shuttered in, according to the old-fashioned style—the shutters still repose horizontal-wise in convenient recesses of the aforesaid passage-way—and a glass door between them. Long ago Change Alley contained only coffee houses and shop premises of high repute, but that was contemporaneous with the fine show of goldsmiths' ware and mercers' stuffs on Cornhill. To-day banks and insurance offices have taken their place.

Out of the remembrance of many a joyous meal shared by kindred spirits at the delightful old place we cannot resist the temptation to descant upon its bygone seductiveness. To enter Baker's Chop House the visitor had to descend a couple of steps beneath the level of the forecourt. One window was screened off with wire so that the company could peer through without being seen from outside, while the other presented an appetising array of viands in infinite variety. Partitioned off into high pew-like compartments, the interior afforded customers the utmost privacy. No rendezvous could possibly be quieter, save when, at eventide, a harper discoursed sweet music in the Alley. A little glazed-in room to the right of the doorway served the dual purpose of a liquor bar and a counting-house where several old

punch-bowls graced a shelf. The oak panelling was mellowed by age, snow-white napery overlaid the rough tables, and the plates were all of the willow pattern. Beside the grill stood the cook with a box in front of him, from which habitués chose their own chop or steak, giving directions how they wished it to be cooked. On either hand of a water-colour painting of the house gleaming pewter pots cheered the sight, and near by hung a portrait in oils of James, who was for thirty-five years the highly respected head-waiter at Baker's.

At this decidedly old-world chop house such a thing as a menu card had never been known. For whatever was grillable the customer went straightway to consult the cook, or, if he preferred an entrée, he listened to the waiter's quiet recital of the list of dishes ready ; and if his fancy leaned towards a cut off the joint, he mounted the staircase to a large room with red walls and no compartments. In the matter of paying for a meal Baker's adhered to the good old custom. On rising the diner was expected to leave twopence under his plate for the waiter, and, assuming him to have had something off the grill, an extra penny for the cook ; after which the white-haired lady at the counting-house wicket made a mental calculation of the items recounted to her for food and drinks on his way out. Baker's Chop House was said to have been built in succession to a tavern bearing the sign of the Swan and Rummer shortly after the Great Fire of 1666. The solid brick piers still visible in what were the capacious wine and beer cellars, and now used as a store-room, were just of the kind deemed necessary for the support of the superstructure.

Whilst expressing our utmost appreciation of the true antiquarian spirit shown by the directors of Martin's Bank, at the sign of the Grasshopper in Lombard Street, over allowing the outer aspect of Baker's Chop House to

adorn Change Alley, we must give vent to a feeling of resentment towards their neighbours for the utter obliteration of Birch's Little Green Shop, facing the Bank of England, pursuant to the long-mooted forward extension of Lloyd's Bank across Pope's Head Alley (likewise

SIR PAUL PINDAR'S HOUSE, BISHOPSGATE

involving the demolition of Short's Wine House) into Cornhill. How easily Birch's might have been preserved in the self-same way as Baker's! Candidly, the knowledge that the familiar carved frontage displaying the words "Soup" and "Jelly (Invalid)" on the frosted glass panes, the tiny brass plates on the doorposts, and

the iron grating beneath the window may now be seen alongside the seventeenth-century front of the Sir Paul Pindar Tavern—originally the mansion of a wealthy City magnate—from Bishopsgate, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, excites in us no desire to survey it as a dry-as-dust exhibit. Excepting only Baker's Chop House, there does not exist any concrete evidence in a populous leading thoroughfare of the City's heart of the slightest consideration by the Worshippers of Mammon for interesting old places where, particularly, generations of men have "dined and wined."

History is said to repeat itself. Since the war there has been a very marked tendency to reintroduce the ancient traders' signs suspended at right-angles to the frontages of shops, taverns, insurance and shipping offices, and, in imitation of the decorative adjuncts to Lombard Street, even banks. Some of these are highly artistic, others altogether too ponderous to captivate the eye, while the majority make for a realization of a Brighter London by being illuminated after dusk. Whether or not they will one day prove a grave source of public danger through their rusty, looped hinges creaking with the wind on an iron bar, like the old-fashioned signs of town and country inns, remains to be seen. Many times in the course of centuries their prototypes inflicted death or permanent bodily injury to passers-by during a storm, with a result that the authorities issued an order for all such devices to be fixed securely against the house-fronts. Sad to relate, the perversity of human nature, constantly engaged in a battle royal with the pliable laws emanating from mere local bodies, soon instigated the reappearance of the projecting signs, followed by the recurrence of accidents when stormy winds wrought havoc in public places.

# Introduction

It is easy to understand how, while reading and writing were the accomplishments of the few, the painting aloft of a tradesman's or craftsman's name and description could have made no sort of appeal to the prospective purchaser of his wares or employer of his handiwork, for which set reason signs and symbols had to be adopted. Down to sixty years ago the fashioning of huge wooden tea-pots, sugar loaves, hams, oil jars, tobacco rolls, gloves, hats, Wellington boots, Noah's arks, keys, padlocks, etc., was still a recognized industry. These and countless more of a similar character sufficiently indicated the nature of the business carried on, and where two or three traders of a kind congregated in the same street confusion was avoided by painting their signs in different colours. As exemplifying the occasional exceptions to the rule of shop signs having an intimate relation to the trades they advertised, it may be instructive to explain that the coat of arms even yet displayed in many an undertaker's window is a relic of ancient times, when the heralds undertook and locally farmed out all the arrangements for the funerals of the nobility.

Whereas in some cases tavern signs followed closely in the wake of ordinary traders' signs by means of a bunch of grapes or a wine tun, the figure of a bear denoting a bear garden, a dog and duck, proclaimants of duck baiting in a pond, mayhap a ship, a hat, or a tool of trade expressive of their establishment for a particular class of frequenters, inn signs had a purely heraldic origin. A perfect comprehension of this statement presupposes an acquaintance with the circumstances under which England's guest-houses, providing "accommodation for man and beast," came into existence. These will be found interestingly set out in the Introduction to our precedent work, *London Inns and Taverns*.

To a Londoner willing to increase his store of knowledge by looking attentively about him wheresoever he may wander, inn and tavern signs would prove a quite fascinating study. Not merely the corruptions from the originals to which so many of them have been subjected in process of time, but odd combinations and seemingly inexplicable examples offer plentiful scope for inquiry. Signboard curiosities present themselves on every side. Others, like the Travellers' Rest, the Travellers' Home Tavern, the Friend at Hand, the Live and Let Live, the Lads of the Village, the Lamb and Lark, the Hoop and Toy, the Widow's Son, and the Three Sisters strike such an alluring note as at once to dispel the notion, ever foremost in the Nonconformist mind, that a " house of call " for refreshment and social intercourse is a den of iniquity.

The educative character of many further examples, each revealing by some historical analogy the period when it was set up, need scarcely be stressed. This observation also applies to the signboard portraiture—nowadays more often represented by the names only—of famous sea lords, military commanders, maritime adventurers, and other national worthies which constituted the sole expression of hero worship ere photography and newspaper illustration were dreamt of. While the average Londoner may be perfectly familiar with the outstanding achievements of the truly great personages so honoured, he unfailingly encounters a number of signs perpetuating the memory of men whose life-work remains to be gleaned from an exhaustive biographical dictionary. Who, for instance, could say off-hand by what stroke of fortune the Marquis of Granby justified the naming of forty taverns in London alone after him ; or what precisely were the claims to popular veneration which led to the establishment of

convivial haunts displaying the signs of the Lord Hill, the Lord Hardy, and a host of others falling into the same category? In the near future perhaps, as London spreads itself still farther into the Home Counties, and Licensing Authorities graciously sanction the setting up of ideal taverns to meet the needs of inhabitants drawn from overcrowded areas, such representative signboards of a revived form of hero-worship as the Edith Cavell, the Jack Cornwall (of Jutland renown), the Captain Fryatt, the Captain Scott, the Sir Ernest Shackleton, and the Sir Alan Cobham may greet one's view. Without enlarging upon this phase of the subject we will turn from it by remarking that a Windmill tavern always incites us personally to conjure up visions of peaceful rusticity where now the hum of conversation and the roar of traffic assert its absorption in the Mighty Metropolis.

To the same Londoner who makes the best use of his eyes out of doors the encaustic-tile paintings beside the chief entrances to many inns and taverns should be fraught with no less interest than the signs themselves. Some of these depict scenes from ancient history ; others illustrate purely local happenings ; others again, like the Bricklayers' Arms in Southwark, are views of the original structures. Here and there the retention of this style of mural embellishment at an erstwhile tavern now put to a quite different usage may strike the observant passer-by as verging upon the incongruous. Thus the Red Cross, in the Borough High Street, always noted for the excellence of its malt liquors, has within the last few years been transformed into a fish-supper bar, albeit a huge representation of " The Canterbury Pilgrims departing from the Tabard Inn " still arrests attention. Similar examples of an even more alien nature might readily be cited.

Among " converted " tavern curiosities the Eagle, in Hill Street Gardens, Peckham, stands out conspicuously. Confronted by the housing problem on first taking up the pastorate of St. Chrysostom—" The church with the Leaning Tower," visible from the High Street—after the war, the Rev. George Potter found himself under the necessity of occupying a vacant alehouse in the vicinity of his ministrations. Still, as at the moment of penning these lines, displaying the sign of the Eagle and notifications of " Watney's Ales " and " Reid's Stout," together with the word " Push " on brass door-plates, its tiny bar served him and his indefatigable lay-helper, Brother John, as an office for parochial work, the parlour as a living-room, and the overhead region for courting " Nature's sweet restorer," until about a year ago, when he availed himself of the offer of a comfortable abode at No. 72, Hill Street, where callers at the old address, labelled " The Vicarage," are directed to apply. Not yet, however, has this interesting association of Church and Public House come to an end, since Brother John continues to reside at the Eagle. Well known all the district around as " The Fighting Parson," on account of his skill in boxing and wrestling, and endeared to the youngsters through his mirth-provoking talks with a ventriloquial figure " Jimmy," Father Potter was a padre in France and the Dardanelles during the war.

Harking back to encaustic-tile paintings, we cherish recollections of a fine topographical example on the side-wall of what was Craig's Fish Shop, one of two ancient timbered houses close to Fetter Lane, in Fleet Street. It still exists, but is hidden by the open door at the foot of the stairs leading to offices above the modern teashop. Our discovery of a much more far-reaching mode of revivifying the past by virtue of being forced upon the view of hundreds of amusement-seekers nightly, as at

matinées, must surely be chronicled here. A novel feature of the iron safety curtain at the beautiful new Carlton Theatre in the Haymarket is a pictured memorial of Anglesea Yard, on the site of which the playhouse stands. Prosaic enough as the representation in distemper appears, it conveys no hint of the ill-fame attaching to the entire area until a beneficent Act of Parliament, dated August 10, 1872, put an end to the night orgies of " The Street of Adventure " by ordering all licensed premises to close down at 12.30 a.m.

So called from an old tavern, the Marquis of Anglesea, on the south side of its approach, Anglesea Yard contained several houses where " murder most foul," the outcome of robberies with violence, occasionally shocked the public mind. Sinister memories likewise clung to the modern-shop conversion of the drinking and betting haunt originally styled the Cock. Little more than a century ago John Thurtell managed it for his brother Thomas and thence, with two accomplices, Hunt and Probert, he decoyed a wealthy stranger, William Weare, on the pretext of finding good sport, to a lonely cottage in Gad's Hill Lane, near Elstree, Hertfordshire, there to be mercilessly done to death. This murder, on October 24, 1823, became the sensation of the hour; it produced a clear profit of £500 by the sale of broadsides and ballads printed at the Catnach Press in Seven Dials, and was actually " reconstructed " with indecent haste at the Surrey Theatre, where crowds of morbid-minded playgoers feasted their eyes upon the identical chaise that had taken the party down to the scene of the crime, the supper table at the cottage, and the sofa upon which Thurtell slept, these forming part of the stage " properties." When subsequently Thurtell paid the penalty for his misdeeds on the gallows, Hunt was transported and Probert pardoned for turning King's Evidence, the

sign of the Cock gave place to that of the Marquis of Anglesea, by which middle-aged "men about town" must yet remember it. The intense public interest aroused by the case at the time illustrates the extreme rarity of any association of licensees with crime even in the bad old days.

Within a few yards of the exits and the stage-door of the Carlton Theatre in Market Street, which runs from the back of the Criterion Restaurant down to the Opera Arcade, alongside His Majesty's Theatre, is the Cock Tavern, famed as London's one and only punch house. Rendered all the more conspicuous by its antiquated setting, the window makes a brave show of spirituous liquors in every variety of brand, and particularly of that concoction so beloved by our sires but rarely commandable to-day at a public table or even at a festive banquet. As long as we can call to mind, "Bennett's Old English Punch" has proved the incentive for an exploration of a thoroughfare quite off the beaten track, in order to take a bottle of the delicious beverage, strong and comforting, away. Since the war the marked prices have naturally soared, but the demand is no less insistent. Accordingly, who that is "in the know" would neglect the opportunity of tickling the palate with genuine punch? As of yore, the luncheon-room on the first floor, recalling the cosiness of the vanished chop-houses, is always well filled at midday.

Real old-fashioned taverns which have sedulously refused to march with the times must now be sought in unexpected places. One such is the King of Denmark in the Old Bailey, with its restful annexe, "Ye Olde Dutch Kitchen," way down Bishop's Court adjoining. Stated on the signboard to be "over 200 years old," this once notorious resort really dates from the reign of James I, when that monarch married Anne, a daughter of Christian IV, King of Denmark, and the Royal father-

in-law came over to spend long happy days at the English Court. On the nights preceding a public execution outside the Debtors' Door of Newgate Gaol, the licensee of the King of Denmark reaped a rich harvest by keeping "open house" for the excited throng of sightseers assembled for the all-important morning spectacle. To-day, as they have always been, the refreshment needs of counsel and witnesses at the Central Criminal Court are ably met in "Ye Olde Dutch Kitchen."

Thirty years ago the unspoiled Bartholomew Close, where Benjamin Franklin on his arrival in London worked for a while as a journeyman compositor, was a delightful spot to wander in, and its quaint taverns shared the historic interest of "Ye Olde Dick Whittington" and the Hand and Shears in Cloth Fair. How sadly changed is the precinct of the oldest church in London may be judged from the boarded-up windows, heralding eventual demolition, of the Coach and Horses, nestled beneath its shadow inside the Priory Gate; the rebuilt Admiral Carter with a mock-antique frontage, after a bomb had reduced it to a heap of ruins and killed the licensee during the war; and the rise of palatial tavern-restaurants on the sites of the Queen's Head and French Horn, and the Goldsmiths' Arms. In the midst of this up-to-dateness, which likewise characterizes neighbouring property, the timbered rear portion of Allen's Dining Rooms, eminently suggestive of a mediæval dwelling, alone bespeaks association with the dim past. As an alehouse originally for the refreshment of thirsty members of the congregation, the Coach and Horses is certainly much older than the introduction of coaches into England, local records affirming it to have been the residence of a minor church dignitary invested with the privilege of dispensing "Church Ale" after the services. Moreover, as evidencing its erection upon

sundry vestiges of the North Cloister of the Priory the cellar walls, of unusual thickness, enclose a clustered pillar. Apart from these tokens of pre-Reformation days, an Early English window admitted light to the taproom.

Time was when all the approaches to Bartholomew Close were shut off from the outside world at nightfall through the medium of massive gates by the parish beadle with a pretence of much ceremony and keys a yard long. A narrow opening in the wall of a court-yard at the Kinghorn Street entrance from Cloth Fair still presents an iron gate notifying strangers of its closure at dusk and reopening at 8 a.m., while midway in the passage is a stout wooden door conveying the same information, and at the Close end thereof yet another iron gate. The duty of locking up now devolves upon the caretaker of the offices of the City of London Union, comprising an old building on the north side of Bartholomew Close. As the interested wanderer would soon discover, the altogether surprising ramifications named after it testify to the modern encroachments of business premises upon the once secluded precinct.

Go where one will, the advent of the " Tied Houses System " has wiped out the individual publican, just as the Variety Theatre syndicates have brought about the extinction of the one-man music-hall. In many respects the change is good. It has made for a recognition of the original purpose of the tavern to supply both food and drink to the resident population as distinct from the obligation imposed upon an innkeeper to provide bed and board and " entertainment " for the *bona-fide* traveller. With the exemplary business-like methods of a steadily increasing number of potential firms styling themselves " licensed caterers " before us, we may confidently look forward to the disappearance of the gin-

palaces and the foodless taverns which in the past contributed so much to the alleged degeneracy of the public-house into a mere drinking-shop. To the brewery companies the thanks of the community are due for improvements and reconstructions scarcely to be expected of a private owner lacking the necessary capital. In a great number of cases the possession of a music licence has added to the general attractiveness of the resort. The directors of a latter-day offshoot of Messrs. Barclay, Perkins & Co., Ltd., have gone much farther. Not content with converting their Anchor Taverns into a pleasing similitude of our railway refreshment buffets, they have introduced a refined cabaret show sustained by a capable troupe of artistes on certain nights of the week.

Unwilling to extend this Introduction to an inordinate length, we will conclude by ventilating the opinion, based upon the ever-growing popularity of supper dances and cabaret shows now freely sanctioned by the Theatres and Music Halls Committee of the L.C.C. at hotels and restaurants, that exactly in proportion as the supply of great exclusive films for the upkeep of palatial cinemas—each equipped with a stage, scenery, and foot-lights—round the West End tends to give out, Variety must again come into its own, and amusement-seekers of all sorts and conditions may once more have placed before them a stage performance with the eminently sociable accompaniments of early and mid-Victorian days, viz. eating and drinking. That the commonalty of the people should be denied some approximation to the nightly allurements of the votaries of pleasure in the upper ranks of Society seems hardly fair. Let us fondly hope that the exercise of still further broadmindedness on the part of the great governing body of the Metropolis will ere long lead to a new order of things for the benefit of the middle classes.

# I

# THE CITY WEST OF ST. PAUL'S

# I

## THE CITY WEST OF ST. PAUL'S

The passer-by in Fleet Street—Hen and Chickens Court—Tavern associations with place-names—The haunt of a public executioner—The golden wallet at Hoare's Bank—Other objects of interest generally unnoticed—The statue over a pawnbroker's shop—Versified mural tablets in honour of Nelson and Lord Byron—Pepys's birthplace in Salisbury Court—The Rose and Crown and the Dorset Gardens Theatre—Signboard artists in Harp Alley—Bridewell Prison and Apothecaries' Hall—Symbolic statuary in New Bridge Street—The Queen's Head, Water Lane—"Mr. Pickwick" and the Horn Tavern—A parochial rest-room—Baynard Castle—"Ye Olde Bell," Wardrobe Terrace—The Old Parr's Head and a Charity School—Longevity in the Parr family—The Falcon Tavern, Knightrider Street—The smallest public-house in London—The Rotunda, St. Paul's Churchyard—The Daniel Lambert, Ludgate Hill—"The House with the Green Shutters"—The anomaly of Ludgate Square—A herald-at-arms at "Ye Olde Bell, Old Bailey."

OF the thousands who daily rush along the north side of Fleet Street, probably none save such as have occasion to enter it ever notice the narrow passage leading to Neale's Mathematical School—a foundation of the year 1750—and a number of business premises labelled Hen and Chickens Court between St. Dunstan's Church and Fetter Lane. Were they to do so, the name might suggest the bygone location of a particularly sequestered retreat for the refreshment of mere man. Always that of an alehouse and rarely to be met with in London, the sign of the Hen and Chickens symbolizes the kindred fondness of the barn-door fowl and the English people for the barley-corn. In this connection Scotsmen will readily call to mind Burns's apostrophe in *Tam o' Shanter* of John Barleycorn ("Inspiring bold John Barleycorn, what dangers thou canst make us scorn!") as the personification of malt liquor.

Equally unheeded by the vast majority of the frequenters of "Brain Street" may be the Falcon, Hare, Hind, Boar's Head, Crane, and Three Kings Courts; and it is safe to assert that these, too, once harboured the traditional resorts for good-fellowship. In the case of the first-named, at least, we have some definite information. Pursuant to the will of a certain John Fisher the Falcon Tavern on the south side, where Wynkyn de Worde, the second English printer, had set up his press under the trade sign of the Falcon, was left to the Cordwainers' Company in trust for the poor of St. Dunstan's parish, subject to the preaching of an annual sermon, the offering up of prayers for the repose of the soul of the benefactor, and the drinking of sack and posset by the vicar and churchwardens to his memory in the vestry within the octave of each July 10th. This Wynkyn de Worde had acted as assistant to Caxton at Westminster, and after the death of "The Father of the Chapel" he became a craftsman on his own account in Fleet Street. Moreover, at the Falcon in its pre-tavern days William Griffiths, the bookseller of St. Dunstan's Churchyard, caused to be printed the earliest English tragedy, *Gorboduc*, while Shakespeare was yet in his swaddling-clothes.

With regard to Three Kings Court, the sign of a vanished snuggery would appear to have been incorporated with that of the Cross Keys (hence the Kings and Keys) on the street front because its fresh licensee came from the Three Kings. In a corrupted form Poppin's Court perpetuates the sign of an ancient tavern, the Popinjay, after an inn or hostel of the Abbots of Cirencester, of which the Red Lion is the lineal successor, while Mitre, Cheshire Cheese, and Red Lion Courts afford access to existing taverns of like designation. Completely cut off from its approach by a wooden

hoarding the erstwhile Crown, in Crown Court, a relic of wild Alsatia, has undergone no structural change since it was made to serve as an annexe, with iron staircases overhead, to newspaper printing works in Salisbury Square. Wine Office Court carries us back to the time when Queen Elizabeth appointed Sir Walter Raleigh "to make lycences for keeping of taverns and retayling of wynes throughout England." Although the great lexicographer spent ten years of his life in Johnson's Court, it received the name of another Johnson, whose property it was and who resided in it. Similarly, so far from having had some remote connection with the Fleet Prison, Racquet Court retains the name of its builder; whereas Bolt Court may be said to echo the full description of that cul-de-sac, Bolt-in-Tun Court across the way, the former entrance to a famous coaching inn.

The widening of Fleet Street shortly before the war involved the demolition of a historic tavern, the Green Dragon, on the south side. Its records were traceable back to the year 1636. Destroyed in the Great Fire, it was rebuilt within the next twelve months, and subsequently became associated with the Popish Plot. From an upper window Lord North once witnessed the burning of the Pope's effigy, which attracted a vast concourse of people to the spot. In our own time the "house" earned some notoriety on account of the visits of Marwood, the public executioner, on hanging days at Newgate. So surely as he had strung up his victim at eight o'clock and attended the coroner's inquest an hour later, would he stroll into the rear bar of the Green Dragon with a handbag containing the fatal rope and the pinioning straps that formed his stock-in-trade, pending the departure of the train which was to take him back to his Lincolnshire home. No one could have suspected the occupation of the retiring little man in

funereal garb there, clutching a pint pot of beer with long, nervous fingers, as the successor of Calcraft; but friendly relations were soon established by curious frequenters "in the know," and then weird tales of scaffold experiences and the respective merits of the long and the short drop promptly revealed his identity. Though we cannot ourselves vouch for the fact, it was said that he had no compunction in disposing of pieces of the rope at a fixed price per inch. How thoroughly such personal contact with the official participator in the "last scene of all" at Tyburn and elsewhere would have been relished by George Augustus Selwyn, whose life-long hobby was to witness a public hanging, every student of London's social history can imagine. Of this eccentric beau a contemporary wrote: "Not only did he attend every execution that he could conveniently get to, but when it was impossible for him to be present, one or two of his friends were commissioned to send him detailed accounts of the whole ghastly performance."

Like Hen and Chickens Court immediately opposite, the carved representation of a leather wallet over the doorway of Hoare's Bank generally passes unnoticed. This was intended to serve as a perpetual reminder of the lowly origin of the founder of the Bank, who, A.D. 1673, came up to London with all his worldly possessions stowed in a wallet on his back. Down to thirty-five years ago the last of the "Old Charlie" boxes was suffered to remain inside the railings against the front wall as a handy receptacle for the capes of policemen on duty. Some other topographical details which in all likelihood escape observation are the great sundial with the inscription "Watch and pray, time flies alway," on the façade of Sell's Newspaper Advertising Offices; the life-sized statue of Mary Queen of Scots on the *Glasgow Citizen* building; the Bride Lane pump,

now boarded up, but with the spout still visible, where the trusting dames of old drank the blessed waters of St. Bridget's Well ; and the crossed knife and fork on the threshold of the passage-way entrance to the Old Bell Tavern, as the symbol of solid refreshment provided by Sir Christopher Wren for his masons during the rebuilding of St. Bride's Church after the Great Fire.

The one object of interest in or around Fleet Street about which Londoners really appear to be curious is the exquisite piece of sculpture on a level with the first-floor windows of a well-known pawnbroker's shop at the south-west corner of Chancery Lane. Often have we seen men trying to read the couplet in gold letters on its base from the narrow refuge in the roadway, but all in vain. According to the sole information available the boyish figure originally adorned the palace of the Lord Protector in the Strand. Long years subsequent to the demolition of that edifice it was discovered in a builder's yard, and after being cleaned up and embellished with a quotation from Byron's *Lara*, sent to the Exhibition of 1862, where it attracted the notice of Mr. Attenborough as a suitable purchase for the decoration of his new premises close to Temple Bar. The lines read as follows : " They were not common links that form'd the chain that bound to Lara Kaled's heart and brain."

Whereas the versified stone tablets affixed to the stair-walls of Nelson House and Byron House, respectively Nos. 53 and 58, Fleet Street (formerly, too, there was another, Hood House, with " He wrote ' The Song of the Shirt ' " at No. 71), bear no direct relation to the personages so honoured, being merely the outcome of an unbounded enthusiasm on the part of the property owner, Sir J. C. Sinclair Tollemache, Bart., the small blue plaque on the front of the White Swan Tavern in Salisbury Court is a trustworthy memorial of the birth-

place of Samuel Pepys, the diarist. A further link with the days of the Merry Monarch is the Rose and Crown Tavern, which has stood on the west side of Dorset Street ever since Pepys chronicled his impressions of the fashionable Dorset Gardens Theatre in its vicinity.

As we are now in the neighbourhood of Ludgate Circus, it cannot but be interesting to trace the bygone associations of Harp Alley, which runs between Farringdon and St. Bride Streets, with licensed premises and marts of commerce of every kind as the headquarters of the sign-painting fraternity. Here, in roomy studios, were produced signboards to the order of inn and tavern keepers, and carved signs symbolic of innumerable trades, handicrafts and professions. The majority of these reflected a true artistry, in striking contrast to the crude workmanship of scores of amateurs seeking the same employment round the country at large. Thus we find No. 744 of the *Spectator* for January 8, 1743, extolling the merits of a Harp Alley artist's handiwork in these terms : " The other day, going down Ludgate Street, several people were gaping at a splendid sign of Queen Elizabeth, which by far excelled all the other signs in the street, the painter having shown a masterly judgment, and the carver and gilder much pomp and splendour. It looked rather like a capital picture in a gallery than a sign in the street." Unhappily, the art of the trade-sign painter and modeller is one of the things that are no more ; but judging from the general satisfaction of employing celebrated artists of to-day for the embellishment of tavern signboards—witness the Prince's Head in Princes Street, Westminster, and the Fellowship Inn on the L.C.C. estate at Bellingham, S.E.—we trust these experiments will have very far-reaching results in the near future.

The changes to which old buildings which have out

lived their pristine utility are subject find an exemplification in the passing of the Bridewell Police Station, first into the hands of the owners of the *Sportsman* and latterly into those of a firm of wholesale newsagents. While part of the Apothecaries' Hall has become a restaurant, Bridewell Prison for refractory City apprentices now houses the administrative offices of Bridewell and Bethlem Royal Hospitals and King Edward's School, its basement being utilized as a tea-house. A bust of the Boy King still adorns the ancient gateway. But few Londoners may be aware that the group of figures on the top of Messrs. Spiers & Pond's Central Offices symbolizes the Antipodes, from which distant part of the world the pioneer railway refreshment caterers in the United Kingdom originally came to gauge the possibilities of our countrymen according a welcome to a team of Australian cricketers and settled here. A wag might affirm that the two statues of Beefeaters on the Union Street façade appropriately call attention to "the pleasures of the table."

That cosy little tavern, the Queen's Head, in Water Lane, like another Queen's Head in Queen Street, Cheapside, and kindred "houses" elsewhere, has the mystic letters "D. D." for an exterior sign, proclaiming commercial relationship with "Dirty Dick's" in Bishopsgate. To promoters of festive gatherings within the area between Ludgate Circus and the Bank of England, Stone's Restaurant in Pilgrim Street makes a bold appeal by reason of its large dining-hall and concert-room. That antiquated corner tavern, the Horn, figures in the *Pickwick Papers* as the place to which the hero of Dickens's sporting romance sent his fellow clubmen Tupman, Winkle, and Snodgrass for "a bottle or two of very good wine" when they visited him in the Fleet Prison. No. 1, St. Andrew's Hill is a very old house distinguished by

a high-pitched roof and green shutters to the upper windows. The street also contains a parochial rest-room for City workers with games, books, and refreshments supplied at what Americans style "cut-rate prices." The Baynard Castle Tavern facing Queen Victoria Street keeps in public memory the ancient stronghold of Ralph Baynard, a companion of William the Conqueror, extending down to the water's edge. To this Norman warrior we owe the name of Bayswater, a corruption of "Baynard's Watering," now known as the Serpentine, on the manor held by him from the Abbot of Westminster.

A stone sign with the inscription "Ye Olde Bell," and the ground-floor tavern of a great block of offices at the corner of Wardrobe Terrace and Addle Hill, are all that Time has spared to us of a once flourishing City guest-house. A few steps eastwards, a glance towards the roof of the Knightrider Street annexe of Messrs. Cook, Son & Co.'s huge warehouse in St. Paul's Churchyard would reveal the letters cut in stone "Old Parr's Head," clearly indicative of a tavern turned over to commercial usage. Born in the year 1483 and dying November 14, 1635, the oldest man on record so commemorated had lived during the reigns of ten English monarchs, viz. Edward IV, Edward V, Richard III, Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I. The story goes that at 120 years of age he married a widow and exhibited every sign of health until the Earl of Arundel took him to the Court of Charles I, and that he succumbed in London to the change of air and mode of living. Small wonder that such extraordinary tenacity of existence should have given rise to many tavern signs throughout the land. Apparently Old Parr was not the sole member of the same family predestined to attain length of days. Thus

the *Evening Post* for August 24, 1757, makes the following comment: "Last week there died at Kanne in Shropshire, Robert Parr, aged 124. He was the great-grandson of old Thomas Parr, who died in the reign of King Charles I and lies buried in Westminster Abbey. What is very remarkable is that the father of Robert was 109, the grandfather 113, and the great-grandfather, the said Thomas, is well known to have died at the age of 152 years and nine months." As instancing the trend of commercial absorption in the City of London, the great premises of Messrs. Cook, Son & Co., Ltd., now extend, by means of communicating bridges, across Knightrider Street and Carter Lane to the Churchyard, and actually embrace, with the original quaint figures and inscriptions over the doorway, the Charity School built for fifty poor children of Castle Baynard parish at the dawn of the eighteenth century in Sermon Lane.

Before dismissing Knightrider Street—so called from the assembling of the knights therein, to avoid the market crowds of Cheapside for the processions by way of Ludgate Hill, the Old Bailey, and Giltspur Street to the Smithfield (or Smoothfield) tournaments—we cannot suffer ourselves to omit a brief reference to the Falcon Tavern, which, now transformed out of all recognition as a convivial haunt, had three large canvases tacked on to the walls illustrating Old London Bridge, Roasting the Rumps in Fleet Street, May Day Revels and the Morris Dancers. The dispersal of these paintings must have been sorely regretted by habitués of antiquarian instincts.

Directing our steps back in Knightrider Street and through Old Change, where the Crown and Sceptre would prove to be the smallest public-house in London, we reach St. Paul's Churchyard. For what specific purpose the Rotunda, on its south side, came to be constructed no man living can say, neither does any dead

and gone historian make the slightest allusion to it. The supposition that it may have been the ancient Chapter House is negatived by the knowledge of Wren's removal of every fragment of Old St. Paul's before laying the foundations of the new Cathedral. Our own belief is that this subterranean retreat must have had something to do with the retailing of "Church Ale," which the Dean and Chapter could still, if they wished, brew for consumption strictly within their own precincts. Paul's Brewhouse and Paul's Bakehouse stood a little farther southward, on opposite sides of Godliman Street. Such a reposeful snuggery as the Rotunda does not exist elsewhere. Its approach is by sixteen steps beside a teashop window at the Cannon Street end of Old Change. Having the advantage of natural light streaming through the glass roof with an electric device to attract notice from afar after dusk, the circular apartment must needs be reached by traversing a long vaulted passage out of which cosy alcoves issue. The popularity of the unique resort is well attested during the luncheon hour, while for afternoon tea over a chat and a smoke little coteries of citizens enjoy its charmed seclusion to the full.

Not often does a specially favoured convivial haunt become a prosaic light-refreshment rendezvous. A notable example of this kind is the Lyons teashop on Ludgate Hill. This was one of the old London coffee-houses. Stimulated by the crowds of sightseers who flocked to see Daniel Lambert, whom that prince of showmen, Barnum, would have described as "The Fattest Man On Earth," when he exhibited himself for seven months of the year 1803 in Piccadilly, the coffee-house keeper converted the time-honoured news-centre into a regular tavern, and set up overhead the portrait in oils of the human prodigy to proclaim its fresh designation. Londoners will readily call to mind the wide-

arched entrance with a side approach also from Ave Maria Lane, and the oldest amongst us the long-vanished pictorial sign on the frontage. Weighing 52 stone 11 lb., Daniel Lambert passed away in his fortieth year at Stamford, Lincolnshire, on June 21, 1809. The circumstances of his burial will convey some idea of his enormous proportions. "The coffin," we are told, "consisted of 112 superficial feet of elm, and was built upon two axletrees and four cog-wheels, on which his remains were rolled into the grave, a regular descent having been made by cutting the earth away for some distance slopingly down to the bottom. The window and part of the wall had to be taken down to allow his exit from the house in which he died." Unless it has been improved out of existence within recent years, there is still a tavern displaying the counterfeit presentment of Daniel Lambert in the High Street, Stamford.

A noticeable, but generally unnoticed, habitation two doors west of Ave Maria Lane is what we choose to style "The House with the Green Shutters," which has stood intact on Ludgate Hill ever since the rebuilding of the City after the Great Fire. How many royal and civic processions and State funerals the occupants of its front windows must have witnessed during the past two and a half centuries cannot be computed. Almost opposite, adjoining the bookseller's shop, one of the oddities of London's topography may be recommended for visitation. Answering to no recognized geometrical description, Ludgate Square—a mere narrow cartway between tall warehouses leading into Creed Lane—betrays the height of impudence on the part of some person who invested it with so pretentious an appellation.

Our last "house of call" on this perambulation must be "Ye Olde Bell," in Old Bailey, where William Oldys,

the antiquary and Norroy King-at-Arms of Heralds' College, spent most of his evenings drinking porter ; and here, no doubt, he received inspiration for the penning of the dainty Anacreontic verse on a fly alleviating its thirst from his pewter pot.

# II

# FROM ST. PAUL'S TO THE TOWER

## II

# FROM ST. PAUL'S TO THE TOWER

A bookseller's trade sign in London House Yard—Romantic story of a collection of old iron—Signless taverns—A pre-Fire house in Cheapside—"The Nag's Head Consecration"—A tavern-keeper's untimely end—The Saracen's Head Inn, Friday Street—Williamson's Hotel, Bow Lane—"Ye Olde Watling" Restaurant—A sequestered butcher's shop—The Ypres Inn—A mummified man in a church porch—Solitary church towers—The Hour-Glass Tavern, Upper Thames Street—London Stone, Cannon Street—"Swan-upping" and the Dyers' Arms—Skinners' Hall and Tallow Chandlers' Hall, Dowgate—The White Hart and the Cock and Bottle—The Bell, Bush Lane—The Old Wine Shades, Martin Lane—Bygone smoke-room jollity—The Crooked Billet, Crooked Lane—London's first tea-shop—The romance of a church clock—Lower Thames Street taverns—A Roman sweating bath—"The St. Mary-at-Hill Cloisters"—Historic memories at the Queen's Head, Great Tower Street—A genuine Restoration-period City merchant's house—Public executions on Tower Hill.

TUCKED away in a corner of London House Yard—a name reminiscent of the ancient town residence of the Bishops of London—at the north-western extremity of St. Paul's Churchyard, there stood down to four years ago an old-fashioned tavern bearing the sign of the Rose and Crown. Like that of the still-existing Harrow at the foot of Whitefriars Street, where John Filby, the tailor, made the plum-coloured suits for Oliver Goldsmith, this was originally a trader's sign, analogous to the Falcon of Wynkyn de Worde's printing-press in Fleet Street, which, as shown in the preceding chapter, afterwards deviated into a thirst-quenching resort. A reference to the Rose and Crown appeared on the title-pages of all works openly brought out by Bogue, the bookseller of London House Yard, but suspicions of his complicity in the publication of the mysterious Martin Marprelate Tracts during the

reign of Mary subjected him to such persecution under Elizabeth that he was almost ruined. At what time the Tudor bookshop became a tavern history deponeth not. As now viewed, the fine array of women's wear proclaims its incorporation in a great millinery emporium abutting upon the Churchyard.

Is it possible to weave a romance around a collection of old iron? We shall see. Most Londoners may require to be informed that the statue of Queen Anne was set up on the west front of St. Paul's, overlooking Ludgate Hill, to commemorate the completion of the Cathedral in the tenth year of her reign, the encircling iron railings being added a couple of years later. Learning from an English newspaper in far-off Toronto in 1874 that the City Fathers were resolved to replace the original railings with others of a more ornamental design, Mr. J. S. Howard, an architect, who had emigrated with his wife to Canada forty-two years previously, addressed to the Lord Mayor of London a great desire to purchase them in fond remembrance of his 'prentice days, when he and his future bride used to do their courting whilst walking round St. Paul's Churchyard, the statue having been their customary place of meeting and leave-taking. How he intended to utilize them the letter left unexplained; perchance he did not know himself. At all events such a sentimental motive on the part of a former citizen could hardly fail to move the authorities at Guildhall into a ready compliance with his request, and so the old railings, thus saved from the scrap heap, were in due course shipped to Canada at his own valuation. Then it really seemed as if Fate had decreed the nonfulfilment of so laudable an object. The vessel was, in fact, wrecked, but eventually the railings were recovered from the sea-bed by divers specially employed for the purpose. Mrs. Howard dying three years

afterwards, her fond husband erected her tomb in the form of a Scottish cairn in High Park, Toronto, near his residence, and surrounded it with the old railings, as attested by an inscription on a brass plate. Where he had stored or how he had used them meanwhile could only have been known to his intimate friends. One cannot but admire his affection for a mass of lumbering iron before the idea of converting it to its ultimate use occurred to him. The foregoing details came to light through an illustration of the tomb, with descriptive letterpress, which appeared in the *Illustrated London News* for January 24, 1887. Mr. Howard himself passed away in September 1891, when the railings were perforce disturbed and the brass plate received an additional name and date. So now, who shall have the effrontery to deny that a real romance clings to this Old London Memorial in High Park, Toronto? On the contrary, the true Britisher who surveys it must, we think, be drawn to a still greater love for the Dear Homeland!

What advantage can be gained by suppressing the sign and referring to a tavern like an ordinary place of business is a matter which few men could explain. Three notable examples of this kind are "No. 11, Cannon Street" (the Golden Last); "No. 119, Fenchurch Street" (the Elephant); and "No. 121, late 199, Bishopsgate" (the White Hart). As everyone in "The Trade" well knows, an inn or tavern must be licensed under a specific title, but the law, somewhat foolishly, omits to make the public exhibition of a signboard obligatory. This procedure is particularly prevalent in connection with our multiple wine and spirit houses, whose proprietors have allowed their licensed signs to become utterly forgotten.

The departed glories of Cheapside, which it overlooked, although its approach was in Bread Street, are

usually centred in the Mermaid Tavern, where Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson and Shakespeare made merry over the flowing bowl. The Nag's Head Tavern, at the corner of Friday Street, played an important part in English history. Recently demolished, the time-seared fabric, with a carved representation of a chained swan on the frontage, was believed to have resisted the Great Fire of 1666. An inspection of the charred oak beams inside went far to support this claim. Here, according to Roman Catholic belief, took place the self-consecration of Protestant bishops at the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Old Stow's able refutation of the scandalous tale in his *Life of Archbishop Parker* leaves little room to doubt that the prelates, eager to possess themselves of the vacant sees, merely assembled in solemn conclave at the tavern, and on a later occasion, when the ceremony had actually been performed, dined together under the same roof.

Concerning the other Cheapside taverns it will suffice to cite one of the earliest, the Crown, which had a sad fate in store for its host, Walter Walters (*temp.* 1467), whose innocent remark that he intended to make his son heir to the Crown, on reaching the ear of Edward IV, caused him to be arraigned for high treason and executed. Down Friday Street, until the year 1844, stood the Saracen's Head Inn, a reputed lodging of Sir Christopher Wren, and possibly the first guest-house to be rebuilt after the Great Fire. With peculiar fitness, we thought at the time, Messrs. J. C. Boyd & Co., Ltd., the Manchester warehousemen, whose premises occupy the site, sent round to the Press their house organ, the *Connaught Quarterly*, embellished with a full-page illustration of the Saracen's Head on the very day of General Allenby's entry into Jerusalem, viz. December 9, 1917. Farther than the great City architect's association with the inn

there seems to be no bookish information of its history available.

Williamson's Hotel in Bow Lane would be very hard to find by a stranger lacking guidance. Even if directed to New Court, in which it stands, the ruinous iron gateway, traditionally said to have belonged to the house of Sir John Fastolfe, the portly prototype of Shakespeare's plays, might easily elude him. The inner gate of wrought iron, with a monogram " W. M.," was the gift of William and Mary as a memento of a ceremonial visit to the City, when they dined at the Old Mansion House. What does this title signify? Simply that with the single exception of Sir William Turner, who continued to reside at the ornate-fronted house, No. 73, Cheapside, specially built for him by Wren, all the chief magistrates of the City of London after the Great Fire and until the present stately Mansion House could be got ready for occupation by Sir Chrisp Gascoigne in 1753, made the archaic edifice in New Court, Bow Lane, their official home.

In the year 1770 the Old Mansion House became Williamson's Hotel, which name and character it has maintained to this day. Outwardly the only structural changes known to have taken place are the modern windows. Over the principal entrance at the upper end of the court is a glazed gallery. The great saloon or lounge along the left-hand side, where a bar has of late been installed, was originally the Mayoral Banqueting Chamber. The forty bedrooms are reached by rambling passages with bulges and seats ; the coffee-room has a single bell-pull labelled " Boots," and a delightful octagonal parlour is believed to mark the centre of the City. Altogether the hotel bespeaks a mansion belonging to days far more romantic than our own. Down to the death, shortly before the war, of " Daddy Williamson,"

who would have resented the idea of supplying luncheons, drinks, and smokes to outsiders, the place was conducted in strict accordance with the mandates laid down by the first of his line. So thoroughly, indeed, was absolute quietude imposed upon both guests and domestics that even after the introduction of friction matches, gas jets and wax tapers were everywhere at hand, night and day, for procuring a light. As a result of this provision no sound save the chiming of Bow Bells ever broke the silence that reigned. Another rule of the establishment was the removal of all secular newspapers and periodicals from the coffee-room on Sundays. Happily, under fresh auspices Williamson's Hotel has marched with the times, its reposeful environment making a potent appeal alike to sojourners from afar and ambassadors of commerce attached to the wholesale warehouses round about.

Country sightseers who, riding on a 'bus top, uniformly note the absence of any meat, fish, or provision store anywhere along the main line of communication from east to west, may be interested to learn that Bow Lane contains a double-fronted butcher's shop. At Christmastide its owner, Mr. C. C. Hopkins, who supplies his stock-in-trade to the chief City restaurants, makes a remarkably fine show of geese and turkeys almost to the roof. At the opposite corner, "Ye Olde Watling" has a tablet declaring its erection in 1668, or two years after the Great Fire. Strange that it should have been considered expedient to set up a house of refreshment for the inner man amid a scene of general devastation! Yet stay! It was in fact a happy forethought on the part of Sir Christopher Wren to provide such a central rendezvous for the special behoof of the masons and bricklayers employed by him upon the rebuilding of London Town.

An echo of the war is the following tit-bit of informa-

tion which deserves to be broadcast for the enlightenment of Londoners generally. It transpired in the course of a personally conducted tour round the City by Mr. W. Tyndall Wulcho, a great authority on Flemish history, under the auspices of the Selborne Society, on February 26, 1916, that the Mansion House station of the District Railway occupies the site of an ancient hostelry displaying the sign of the Ypres Inn. This had originally been the mansion of William of Ypres, a renowned warrior of the fourteenth century, who, as a reward for services rendered to the English King, was granted a plot of land in Candlewick (now Cannon) Street, and built his residence, distinguished by a coat of arms, upon it. Here, Mr. Wulcho told the party of interested wanderers, John of Ypres, a son of the warlike William, was entertaining John of Gaunt (or Ghent) when, in the year 1381, the insurgents, led by Wat Tyler, stormed the place preparatory to making an attack upon John of Gaunt's own Palace of the Savoy in the Strand. Fortunately both the host and his guest effected their escape by boat to Bankside, and thence on horseback to Kennington, where the King in those days had a rural retreat. To this authoritative assertion we can add nothing of our own beyond stating that the place-name Kennington, like that of Kensington, anciently expressed a settlement in the King's mead or meadow.

Down Garlick Hill the Church of St. James the Greater (of Compostella) asserts itself boldly from either end by means of an effigy of Spain's patron saint in the habit of a pilgrim, with staff, gourd, and scallop-shell, perched on the top of its projecting clock. A scallop-shell serves as the parish boundary mark, and since it abounds on the shores of Spain, when worn in the hat it testified to the completion of a pilgrimage to his shrine at Santiago. The discovery of a mummified man, believed

to have been of an early lord mayor, in the tower of this church many years ago gave rise to such irreverent curiosity that the rector decided to keep it locked up in a cupboard of the porch for inspection by special request.

OLD VIEW OF ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, GARLICK HILL

A short distance westwards from Garlick Hill, in Upper Thames Street, is the five-storey tower, 120 feet high, on an island site, close to the pavement, with dingy warehouses behind it, of St. Mary Somerset. A genuine

bit of Wren's work, this City derelict was suffered to stand ingloriously until April 1923, when it became a rest-house for business women and girls. Two other solitary church-towers, likewise in an excellent state of preservation, are those of St. Olave, now forming the rectory of the neighbouring parish of St. Margaret, Lothbury, down Church Passage, Old Jewry, and of All Hallows Staining, at the rear of the London Tavern in Fenchurch Street. The pre-Fire church (never rebuilt) of the last-named tower was the one visited by the Princess Elizabeth—because none other presented an open door—to offer thanks for her deliverance from the Tower, and afterwards she dined on pork and peas at the adjacent King's Head, subsequently renamed the Queen's Head, and now known as the London Tavern. Rescued from the Great Fire, the metal dish on which this meal was served is to-day a proud possession of the superior tavern-restaurant. Here also the City Glee Club, two hundred years old, is still a very "live" institution. Not yet can we wholly dismiss City churches. A passing allusion to the Hour-Glass Tavern in Upper Thames Street reminds us that the ancient mode of computing time, often pressed into service for the duration of a preacher's sermon, is illustrated by an hour-glass with brass fittings on a pillar over the pulpit of St. Alban's Church in Wood Street, Cheapside. Prior to the substitution of the present-day resort for the original "tap" of the City of London Brewery, way down the adjoining gateway, a colossal wooden hour-glass, constituting the firm's trade-mark, met the public gaze.

Returning to Cannon Street, we unfailingly have our attention drawn to the Milliarium, or central milestone of Roman London, let into the wall of St. Swithin's Church, by a glance at the adjacent tavern signboard, the London Stone. The Dyers' Arms Restaurant,

featuring a "Quick-Lunch Buffet Counter," owes its sign to the Hall of the Dyers' Company on Dowgate Hill. This important City guild shares with the Vintners the privilege of keeping swans on the upper reaches of the Thames, where the stocktaking of the birds and the marking of the bills of the young ones is an annual custom.

Like so many others displaying the same sign, the Skinners' Arms Tavern was of old the accepted rendezvous of everyone associated with the animal-skin trade. Well worthy of a visit is Skinners' Hall, also on Dowgate Hill, the Cedar Drawing-room of which, approached by a grand staircase, emits a perfectly delicious odour. In this thoroughfare, too, is the Hall of the Tallow Chandlers' Company, whose ancient function gave the name of Candlewick to a ward, and, ere it came to be corrupted, to Cannon Street, was to supply candles and tapers to Roman Catholic churches. Exactly as now seen, the White Hart Tavern, at the corner of Abchurch Lane, purports to have been "established over 100 years," but a framed parochial notice in the grill-room invests it with a much greater antiquity. The Bell, down Bush Lane, is an exceedingly attractive resort, distinguished by an appropriate sign in relief on the façade. Meriting the like recommendation, the Cock and Bottle, at the corner of Laurence Pountney Hill, affords us the sole surviving London example of the by-no-means-uncommon corruption elsewhere of the sign Cork and Bottle, indicative of liquors being served in bottle as well as from the cask. The Cork and Bottle was also the original full designation of the famous Cock Tavern in Fleet Street. A strikingly novel feature of the publican's business in bygone days, when oilmen's shops must have been non-existent, is exemplified by the concluding lines of a lithographed circular which a fresh

licensee, R. Pallett, caused to be sent out under date June 5, 1852, to signalize his taking over of the Cock and Bottle in Cannon Street. They run as follows: "Highly rectified Spirits of Wine 54 to 60 pr. Ct. O. Proof for Varnish and other purposes not allowed by the Excise to be sold by the Chemists and Druggists."

Antiquated taverns where a man lingering over his refreshment can throw himself completely into the past are now very hard to find. Out of the whole number of such snuggeries which at one time abounded in the City the average Londoner who has "dined and wined" at historic houses of good cheer would be sorely perplexed if called upon to name a single survivor, even devoid of literary or other associations, worthy to rank with the Cheshire Cheese. The fact of this "storied tavern," hidden away up a narrow court in Fleet Street, having been extolled by newspaper scribes throughout the English-speaking world, emphasizes its seductiveness and archæological interest.

Will it be believed that a still older one, which actually escaped the Great Fire, awaits exploration by the "antiquity hunter"? The statement seems hardly credible, but, as we are so often reminded, "Truth is stranger than fiction." Known only to habitués who drop in from neighbouring business premises, the Old Wine Shades in Martin Lane, Cannon Street, has undergone no structural change whatever since the year 1663, when the fabric, originally the residence of some City magnate, mayhap a merchant prince, as evidenced by a beautifully carved oak staircase and other ornamental features, became a wine-house. Tradition asserts that the first vintner bore the name of Sprague, and, lacking any lettered signboard, "Sprague's Wine House" continued to be the commonly accepted description of the place until an early nineteenth-century successor, like so

many others of his kind round London, followed the lead of Mr. Savage, who in the year 1819 converted the ground-floor of the Old Bank at Brighton into a public wine and spirit room ; and since it had a rear approach from the Pavilion Shades and was also shaded by Mrs. Fitzherbert's house opposite, caused the word " Shades " to be painted overhead in the place of " Bank." To-day the sign has quite slipped out of vogue, there being only one other, and that something of a misnomer, viz. the Old Shades at Charing Cross.

Archaic to a degree is the outer aspect of this resort for choice liquors and good-fellowship in Martin Lane. But for the notification, " The Old Wine Shades, established 1663 ; Port and Whisky Specialities," displayed at right-angles to the time-honoured frontage, the ordinary passer-by, much though he might boast of his acquaintance with the Great World of London, could never suspect it to be a convivial haunt. Within, however, a lover of the quaint and curious would enjoy his environment to the full. Not nowadays, it is true, do rough-hewn cross-beams, a sanded floor, and the discolorations of centuries present themselves. Since the war sundry renovations making for increased comfort and attractiveness, yet in no wise detracting from an antiquated charm, have taken place under the auspices of the El Vino Company. There are still the high pews or " pens," so beloved by our sires for the sake of privacy, each enclosing a table, now planed and polished—whereon formerly business transactions were discussed or ratified over drinks—with cushioned forms ; while the begirmed ceiling remains hidden behind match-boarding and plaster. Perhaps the only manifestations of sheer age are betrayed by the oil paintings and their faded gilt frames on the walls. Separated from the outer bar by glass panes is the rudely furnished smoke-room

which, lighted by an immense roof lantern, recalls the primitive parlour of a country-side inn. Heaped up ingloriously on the top of the doorway may be seen innumerable coal-black "churchwardens" that of yore reposed in individual notches of a long pipe-rack embellished with the initials of their owners. Although a chairman no longer holds a debate, presides over a discussion on current topics, or yields to a general request for a rollicking song at eventide, the little coteries of citizens prone to enjoy a leisurely hour or so over pipe and glass in the good old-fashioned way before making for their suburban homes, go far to suggest "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" which characterized the tavern life of other days. As was usual in pre-Fire mansions of importance, the top floor of the Old Wine Shades contains a decorated leaden cistern, this one bearing the date 1663. The vast cellars, too, would well repay inspection.

What modern building construction can accomplish to bring about a perfect realization of the antique is abundantly exemplified by the near-by Crooked Billet in Crooked Lane. From all points of view this remodelled tavern carries us back in spirit to the days of Sack and Canary—a truly fascinating picture, only marred by the anachronism of Beer Engines. One cannot help thinking that bottled ales and stout—as at the Old Wine Shades—would be more in keeping with its Tudor aspect. Old Stow makes the following reference to the original tavern when (1560) he was thirty years of age: "There came into Crooked Lane certain men to buy a gun or two, and shooting off a piece it burst, went through the tavern, and spoiled five more houses. And of that goodly church adjoining it threw down a great part of one side and left never a glass window whole. And by it eight men and one maid were slain and divers

hurt." Had it not been that Stow must himself have witnessed the havoc caused by the catastrophe, such an amazing story might be open to question. The church here alluded to was that of St. Michael, containing the tomb of Sir William Walworth. Rebuilt during the reign of James II, the Crooked Billet underwent the transformation which everyone who surveys it admires in the year 1921. At luncheon time alike in all the bars no vacant seats are discernible.

Palatial bank premises facing London Bridge between King William and Gracechurch Streets have obliterated that early depôt of the Aerated Bread Company behind the statue of " The Sailor King " which was destined to become the first London tea-shop. Established for the sale of Dr. Dauglish's machine-made bread and milk scones, its customers so often inquired whether they might rest awhile and be served with a cup of tea over sampling their purchases, that the manageress at length prevailed upon the directorate to comply with an evidently urgent demand. The marvellous development of this gracious concession is too well known to require treatment at our hands.

Much as Londoners may admire the stately proportions of Adelaide House at the Bridge foot, we greatly regret the blotting out of the church clock of St. Magnus the Martyr just behind it. This has an interesting history. When Charlie Duncombe, the future Lord Mayor and Knight, was a poor boy he had to wait for his master day by day on London Bridge without the slightest idea of the flight of time. On one such occasion it occurred to him that if ever he became well-to-do in the world he would put up a clock in front of the church so that others would not be similarly circumstanced. True to his word, he in after years defrayed the cost of installing the present clock, which has ceased to thrust itself upon the public

view. Sir Charles Duncombe was elected to the Mayoral chair in November 1708.

Identified with taverns and eating-houses ever since the days of Falstaff, Prince Hal, and their fellow-roysterers, what is left of Eastcheap still contains a fair quota of convivial haunts. By way of a sign the Monument Tavern has a painted representation of the great fluted column near the roof at the street corner. An ever-open doorway during business hours adjoining the Ship ("established 1612") affords access to a series of corridors between blocks of offices and sampling rooms, which are popularly regarded as short cuts into Fenchurch Street, Philpot, Mincing, and Mark Lanes, all under cover. According to Old Stow, Pudding Lane was so called from the scalding houses for hogs of the Eastcheap butchers, their "'puddings' with other filth of beasts" being voided down the lane to dung-boats on the quay-side. We consider it worthy of comment that the carved representation of the rebuilding of London on the base of the Monument is the only known example cut in stone of a labourer mounting a ladder with a hod on his shoulder.

Of the many taverns in Lower Thames Street mention can be made here of only a few. The Steam Packet, of course, refers to the former daily pleasure sailings from Old Swan Pier, just as the Ticket Porter in Arthur Street close by is a memory of the Guild of Fellowship Porters, long dissolved. The King's Head and Mermaid illustrates a licensee's fancy for incorporating the sign of a "house" where he had made himself highly popular with that of his latest acquisition; the Cock has a saloon exhibit of a gamecock in a glass case; the Yorkshire Grey is a favourite luncheon resort, while the Three Kingdoms, better known as one of Messrs. Barclay, Perkins & Co.'s "Anchor Taverns," so designated after

the centuries-old Anchor Tavern still standing on their Bankside estate, strikes a note of selectness due to its buffet-like aspect. *En passant* we may be rendering a public service by calling attention to the existence of a Roman sweating or hot-air bath open for visitation on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoons beneath the Coal Exchange. On the other hand, the " St. Mary-at-Hill Cloisters," so described over the gateway, a few doors from the church in the street of the same name, and the remains of an ancient prison in Love Lane, scarcely invite exploration, having for many years now been absorbed by the wholesale fish trade.

Familiar enough though the large corner medallion encircled by vine leaves of the Queen's Head Tavern in Great Tower Street must be to countless citizens, not one in a thousand can have the remotest idea of its historic significance. " Here is the hostelry," once wrote the Rev. A. G. B. West, the Rector of St. Dunstan's-in-the-East, who should know something of his surroundings, " where Falstaff himself drank his sack. In this house Henry VII and his Queen sought quiet from courtiers and concerted their plans for securing from the Pope a licence for their son Henry to marry his deceased brother's widow. The Master Parson of the parish in which Harp Lane stands was their agent. He was also a cardinal, a bishop, and a candidate for the Papacy. What a special shape that house, still marked by medallions of two Kings and a Queen, gave to the English Reformation ! "

A few steps eastwards of the modern red-brick pile forming the administrative offices of Christ's Hospital since the removal of the Blue-Coat School to Horsham, a highly interesting house awaits discovery. We say " discovery " because, not figuring in any guide-book or other work dealing with Wonderful London, it is utterly

unknown to the great mass of citizens save those who have business relations with its occupants, notably Messrs. Dent, Urwick & Yeatman, the old-established wine merchants on the first commercial floor, to reach which several steps must be mounted. Approached by large wooden gates closed at night, and having a spacious courtyard, No. 34, Great Tower Street may justly claim to be the sole remaining example of the Restoration-period home of a prosperous City merchant who resided with his family and servants over the counting-house. The work of rebuilding went merrily on two years after the Great Fire, and a photograph of an ancient drawing shows that the original lines *sans* gables or carved ornamentation, such as one might expect to find in a Tudor mansion, were faithfully followed. Everywhere oak beams, wainscoted walls, and quaint fireplaces with ornate overmantels present themselves. Each individual office, too, contains a grandfather's clock. A detailed description of this combined domicile and business house, which takes us much farther back than the lace and ruffle age, the Sedan chair, and the family coach, would prove instructive reading. Sufficient has, however, been said to whet curiosity.

One thing more. Now that the noble building of the Port of London Authority graces the west side of Trinity Square it would surely be well if a conspicuous signpost were set up facing its portal to indicate the site of the scaffold where so many brave men not of Royal blood suffered death by the headsman's axe. The last public execution on Tower Hill, and also the last beheading anywhere in the United Kingdom, was that of Lord Lovat on April 9, 1747. This brings us to the end of our City perambulation due east from the Temple Bar Memorial.

# III

# SUNDAY IN THE CITY

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# SUNDAY IN THE CITY

The charm of a Sunday saunter in the Haunts of Mammon—Lifeless lanes and sequestered churchyard nooks—Small church congregations—Opportunities for studying architectural details—Early-morning activities at Billingsgate—Shrimps and periwinkles for Cockney tea-tables—"The Street of Waving Palms"—A St. Botolph's Church at each end—A ghastly relic—The Bell Tavern, Church Row—The Sir Walter Raleigh, New Street—Sam's Coffee House and "The Old Jewellery Mart"—Sunday trafficking at the St. James's Tavern—Phil's Buildings and the City Clothes Exchange—Week-day aspect of the old-clothesmen's headquarters—Bartering Jews and Gentiles—"Rag Fair" and Petticoat Lane—Shell-fish barrows in Gravel Lane—Aldgate and the Minories—Church-going bells at eventide.

RECENT and impending changes "down Whitechapel way," notably the removal of the ancient hay-market from the vicinity of the granite obelisks defining the eastern limits of the City of London; the demolition of the row of butchers' shops and their shambles in Aldgate High Street; and, perhaps most important of all, the provision of a substantial building to replace the corrugated-iron sheds of the City Clothes Exchange off the north side of Houndsditch, afford us a capital pretext for a survey of London's Ghetto so far as its seething Sunday life contrasts with the reposeful aspect of the City's heart when Sabbath chimes resound upon the air.

First and foremost let us draw a mental picture of the scene that awaits the average Londoner who, just for once in a way, flits across the City from his suburban home on the Day of Rest. To such an one, save that the various commercial establishments are closed and the streets present no congestion of traffic, the difference may lack

its full measure of appreciation. It is not, however, to the regular omnibus routes that he must look for manifestations of a change ; it is in and about the numberless byways of the City proper, where the sacred character of the occasion is thoroughly respected, that the real charm of a Sunday-morning saunter may be found. Very pleasant it is to turn aside from the Haunts of Mammon into a labyrinth of narrow streets and lanes undisturbed by the sound of footsteps or the rumble of wheels, and rendered the more impressive by the call of church-going bells until suddenly—we are now assuming it to be the merry summer-time—on passing a sequestered square or court, the sight of a perambulator, with its human burden tended by a group of neatly dressed children basking in the sunshine, or the tingling tones of a piano proceeding from an open window near the sky, serves to remind us that the City can still count upon a few inhabitants. Even more pleasant it is to take up a position in one of those sheltered nooks, each a veritable oasis amid a wilderness of buildings, with which the City abounds, listening to the twittering of birds through the pervading sound of the organ and the chanting of an adjacent church choir.

Prompted by curiosity, one might venture within the sacred edifice to find the congregation numbering a score of worshippers all told—City housekeepers and their families. These are the only actual residents " the one square mile " can now boast of. But for them the City by night might well be described as the City of the Dead, since none but the occupants of its cramped-up graveyards would lie therein. The time has long passed by when the tradesmen of Cornhill and Cheapside lived over their shops and merchants occupied sumptuous mansions in the neighbourhood of Broad Street. The ordinary frequenters of the churches are soon dispersed

to their homes, taking their departure as mysteriously as they came ; hence the City knows not those characteristic processions of gaily-dressed church-goers which obtain in suburban districts and country towns. Still less is the heart of the City marked by the assemblage of men waiting for the opening of the public-houses ; the few pedestrians, like the omnibus passengers, are for the most part bound for the railway stations or the steamboat piers, and, their Sunday dinner over, the housekeepers themselves are only too anxious to leave the City behind them for a visit to their friends. The numerous contingents of cyclists that speed their silent course along the principal thoroughfares never pause for refreshment at a prominent "house of call," where the pre-war "*bona-fide* traveller" was unknown, because, possessing only a six days' licence, the average City publican keeps his premises under lock and key on Sundays. Accordingly the public cease from troubling and the barman is at rest.

During the earlier hours of the morning, that is to say up to nine o'clock, when the motor buses commence to run, even Cheapside is as deserted as it could possibly be. The milkman's limited round is soon completed, and the City policeman with his measured stride is literally "monarch of all he surveys." This, then, is the time when architectural details can be studied at leisure ; when the spectator may stand in the centre of the roadway bathed in sunshine contemplating the effect of light and shade as produced by long rows of high stone buildings wrapped in solemn repose. Occasionally some fresh arrival by the Hull boat from Irongate Wharf beyond the Tower will make his appearance groaning under the weight of his personal baggage and greatly wondering at the total lack of vehicular facilities. If it be his first visit to London, the solemnity of the scene

around him must leave an impression upon his mind which cannot soon be effaced.

In striking contrast to all this desolation there is yet one portion of the City where the busy hum of life assails the ear. Though the wholesalers' shops in Lower Thames Street are closed, and somewhere or other the greasy fish-porters are fast asleep, Billingsgate itself is alive with the traffic of shell-fish just brought to land by a small fleet of Danish and Dutch boats. Here the venders of periwinkles (so relished at their Sunday teas by a certain type of Cockneys) are busy making purchases at first hand, and loading up their donkey barrows for a quick run to Hoxton and neighbourhoods farther afield. Large quantities of shrimps and prawns, which ordinarily reach London by train, are also brought up the Thames on Sunday mornings.

With these minor exceptions the City betrays no sign of life until the Sunday visitor from the suburbs pursues his way along what might be termed "The Street of Waving Palms," between two churches dedicated to St. Botolph. Why Houndsditch should have been so blest in the religious ages may never have entered into the cogitations of the average Londoner. By way of contradistinction to the one facing Aldgate, that situate in Bishopsgate is styled St. Botolph's Without. Beside it, at the corner of the churchyard, now utilized by a tobacconist, is an interesting example of the old City Watch houses. With a nice regard for honouring the East Anglican recluse who in the seventh century set up his cell on the Lincolnshire coast and so gave the name of Botolph's Town to the Boston of to-day, thus making himself the patron saint of travellers, the parishioners of Aldersgate Without also sought the protection of St. Botolph by dedicating the church adjoining "The Postmen's Park," outside the City gate, to him. Botolph

Lane, Billingsgate, suggests another, which was not rebuilt after the Great Fire.

In the vestry of St. Botolph's Church, Aldgate, may be seen the head of the Duke of Suffolk, father of Lady Jane Grey, which fell on Tower Hill in the year 1554, and was discovered in the vaults of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Minories, in 1849. Looking up Houndsditch, where all the shops are open and, due to increased pedestrian traffic, Sunday notwithstanding, the taverns betray an unwonted activity, one finds it difficult to realize that St. Botolph's Churchyard, and the site of the houses now comprising Church Row, was the largest and deepest of the burial pits dug during the Great Plague. All night long torches flared in the ground for the guidance of fearsome dead-carts that lumbered up to them and emptied their ghastly burdens, amid the clanging of bells, promiscuously into the yawning abyss. Pleasanter than to indulge such a melancholy reflection is it to seek the cheerful environment of the rebuilt Bell Tavern in Church Row, or partake of luncheon on its first floor. A panel in the private bar contains this inscription : " Quality, Civility, Homeliness, and Friendliness will ever be extended to all." Could hospitality be expressed in more winsome terms ?

Proceeding along Houndsditch we obtain a glimpse, between Nos. 150 and 151, of the dreariest imaginable open space formed by business warehouses—to wit, Gun Square. The Sir Walter Raleigh in New Street, facing Gravel Lane, must have stood alone in the fields when Rosemary Lane—the Petticoat Lane of to-day—harboured hedgerows and elm-trees, while the salubrity of the district incited even the nobility to build suburban residences therein. So far as we are aware, no other inn or tavern in London perpetuates the name of the introducer of the tobacco plant into England. Considering

that Sir Walter Raleigh was invested by Queen Elizabeth with the right of granting licences for the keeping of taverns and of retailing wines throughout the country, it seems strange that he should not be better represented. We note also the absence of his statue from the group of Elizabethan worthies on the façade of the London Tavern in Fenchurch Street. This smacks of a grave injustice.

Before passing on to the real Sunday attraction of Houndsditch we cannot suffer ourselves to omit the recommendation of a visit to the scene of a brisk, albeit sedate and thoroughly dignified, trafficking in jewellery at the St. James's Tavern at the corner of Creechurch Lane and Bevis Marks. Specially authorized by the City Fathers way back in the year 1745, though it may have existed much earlier, what a huge fascia board proclaimed to be " The Old Jewellery Mart," in association with the tavern sign of Sam's Coffee House, was demolished in November 1892 for the widening of the west side of the Square somewhat oddly designated St. James's Place. But few men out of the district were aware that, pursuant to the strict observance of the Jewish Sabbath, Sam's Coffee House, which had been in the possession of the Hyman family for a century and a half, never opened its doors on Saturdays. Another point of interest concerning the old place was that Lord Macaulay, in his *History of England*, refers to it as a secret resort of the Jesuits during the reign of James II.

The wholesale displacement of the old-clothes shops by tall warehouses on the east side of Middlesex Street many years ago had the effect of focusing the traffic in left-off garments in and about the City Clothes Exchange, beyond the turnstile of Phil's Buildings, Houndsditch. Here the regular dealers in a large way of business have their stalls, and a vast concourse of men is in evidence on

Sunday mornings. The neighbouring courts and alleys are no less thronged, just as Wentworth, Middlesex, and other streets farther afield constitute a general open-air Sunday market. Phil's Buildings consist of half a dozen houses, three on each side, literally packed with old clothes, a large proportion of which is put on sale within the Mart. Throughout the week—Saturdays excepted—heaps of garments may be seen lying on the pavement in process of being sorted and valued and kept apart for exportation ; it is then the wholesale dealers buy what the old-clothesmen have picked up on their rounds.

In the economy of the old-clothes trade nothing is wasted. Old coats and trousers, when turned and made to look like new, are resold to the slop shops. Boots and shoes, cobbled up, overhauled, and well blacked by " translators," are in a few days' time added to the long rows of kindred articles to be met with outside the slop shops of the New Cut, or in other thoroughfares corresponding to the Monmouth Street of Dickens's day. Black suits are converted into " best-boys' suits " for the " tally " trade ; old coats falling into the category of " breakage " are made into boys' caps ; while garments beyond all hope of redemption are turned into " shoddy," just as frayed linen shirts are sent to the paper mill.

If the old-clothesman has anything good to offer he ignores the advances of the Jew buyers and addresses himself to the second-hand wardrobe dealers, many of whom attend the Mart of an afternoon in the hope of meeting with some special garment " bespoken " by a customer. Old liveries, coachmen's coats, uniforms, swords, etc., are in frequent request. Their chief reliance for such articles is, however, upon unredeemed pledges as they arrive at the City Clothes Exchange from the London pawnbrokers. There was a time when such

pledges were sold by auction in the Exchange itself, but the auctions now take place at the Mart off Cornhill. Naturally the major portion of the stock on view in Rag Fair has lain by for a twelvemonth after having been handled by a pawnbroker's assistant.

Scores of mechanics and others who come long distances to pick up bargains in the vicinity of Houndsditch on Sunday mornings know nothing of the assemblage of stalls and barrows in Middlesex and Wentworth Streets. To them Phil's Buildings and the Mart behind it is the only Petticoat Lane. Outside the six houses referred to above, stalls are arranged for the display of hats, caps, coloured handkerchiefs, braces, and the like articles of apparel. Generally speaking these command only a passing notice. It is within the corrugated-iron structure that the ceaseless gabble of a trade conducted on the principle of " a shilling in hand is better than a pound's worth of stock tied up " suddenly breaks upon the ear. The visitor might easily imagine himself in the Central Meat Market on a Saturday night, so incessant is the clamour and so many are the temptations to buy at altogether ridiculous prices. Around the sides of this world-renowned emporium of old clothes are long pegs heavily weighted with coats of all sorts, sizes, and colours which have seen better days, and, for aught one knows, may once have been worn by the highest in the land. In front of these, on a raised platform, are piles of vests and trousers neatly folded, as if they had just been handed down from the shelves of a clothier's store. And to secure buyers for all this merchandise is the object of the shouting, bawling, gesticulating sons of Judith and Benjamin, who are not in the least averse to converting themselves into lay figures for the purpose of showing off the coats they so frantically recommend. Strange to relate, although the coat is several sizes too large it fits

perfectly. One begins to suspect some trade trickery in the procedure ; yet, if the garment suits the taste of gullible purchasers, what matters it to the bystander ?

Pressing our way between the rows of stalls in the central portion of the Mart, where the goods exposed for sale can be examined at close quarters, and where business is transacted in a less boisterous manner than around the sides of the building, we find ourselves in the theatrical-costume department. The attempt to catalogue even a tithe of the showy articles of wearing apparel here exposed would be as futile as the endeavour to enumerate the miscellaneous wares on sale in Middlesex, Goulston, and Wentworth Streets. Let it, therefore, suffice to observe that, no matter what the newly fledged actor or the experienced stage manager may be in search of, he will find it here, and, what is more, if he understands Jew-baiting in a financial sense, at his own price. Elizabethan " shapes," " square cuts," burlesque and pantomime dresses, doublets, trunks, hose, tights, fleshings, russet and velvet shoes, tragedians' boots, swords, daggers, and wigs of every description abound. To comic singers this section of Rag Fair commends itself as a very treasure-trove when in quest of eccentric stage attire. Indeed, it is no uncommon thing for half a dozen public favourites to be recognized in Rag Fair on a Sunday morning. Hither, too, come restaurant and coffee-room waiters intent upon purchasing a dress suit more presentable than the one which has done long service ; town travellers newly risen to the dignity of having a business brougham or car of their own, in quest of an outfit for its driver ; and enterprising tradesmen anxious to deck out their errand-boy with a cast-off page's suit. But let us not tarry here.

Whatever the former character of Petticoat Lane—a term equally applicable to the City Clothes Exchange

and Middlesex Street—may have been, petticoats are nowadays very much in the minority. Only one stall within the Mart itself is conspicuous for feminine apparel, viz. dresses and gowns rather than underskirts. Then there are the sellers of odds and ends—soiled shirts, old collars, cuffs, fronts, ties, scarves, and pocket-handkerchiefs, recalling a visit to Caledonian Market on a Friday afternoon. A goodly number of these petty traders line Borer's Passage and the bonded warehouses behind the Exchange, where also venders of petticoats and children's clothing come into view. Others, passing in and out of the crowd, offer new silk handkerchiefs reflecting all the colours of the rainbow at ninepence each. Of course there are any number of match, shoe-lace, collar-stud, cigarette-paper, and cheap stationery sellers—wheresoever one finds an assemblage of people such gentry will be found. But perhaps the most energetic of the walking tradesmen hereabouts are the Jews who seek to tempt the passers-by into an examination of the garments carried on their arms, the object being to lure them to the slop shops at a few yards' distance, by the proprietors of which they are engaged as touts. The entire fronts of these premises are hidden by old clothing after the style of Middlesex Street in bygone days, and an eager competition takes place among the rival shop-keepers. The same thing occurs in all the neighbouring turnings, where clothing is offered for sale by the cart-load.

All this shouting naturally makes the merchants dry, and therefore eager to partake of liquid refreshment at the convenient stall close at hand. They are a sober race, these Jews, take them all in all. It was the British workman in pre-war days who pressed his way into the public-house during prohibited hours on the plea of being a "*bona-fide* traveller," when the distance

covered fell infinitely short of the legal stipulation. Due to the wholesale abuse of this privilege, the Montefiore Arms in the north-west corner of the City Clothes Exchange lost its licence and is now a prosaic eating-house. The Jew prefers to quench his thirst on the spot with lemonade or ginger-beer. The like observation may be applied to solid refreshment. Everywhere in the Ghetto on Sunday mornings there are "cried" fearfully and wonderfully made confections which, in the words of the comic song, may be "all right when you know them, but you have to know them first." A particularly popular article of diet in this neighbourhood is a species of small pickled cucumber or gherkin called attention to by the name of "wally-wally." We have seen Jews of both sexes devour these things with evident gusto, but the Christian passes them by unheeded.

Largely patronized, on the other hand, by the artisan frequenters of Rag Fair are the shell-fishmongers' barrows and stalls lining Gravel Lane. It is only fair to add that most of the men, after having indulged in oysters or mussels themselves, exercise the forethought to treat the old and young folks at home to a pint or two of winkles for their Sunday tea. One other observation we must make before taking leave of Rag Fair and its habitués. We have picked up more slang in the course of a couple of hours' study of life and character in and around the City Clothes Exchange than could perhaps be gleaned during a month's residence among the costermongers of Hoxton or Bethnal Green. But then, Rag Fair is scarcely the place where one would expect to become imbued with lofty ideas.

Aldgate is always a lively neighbourhood, on Sundays especially so. The fruiterers, tobacconists, and other caterers for the holiday strollers, are well sought after, while the hairdressers appear to be exceptionally busy.

As the afternoon wears on the Minories become the scene of a general movement towards the gardens surrounding the Tower Moat and the public promenade on the river front. Meantime the closing of the shops and the dispersal of the market crowds bring even Houndsditch into line with the rest of the City's heart. After six o'clock the pervading stillness is relieved by the tolling of church bells summoning the few resident worshippers to evening service. The effect of emerging from an ancient fane into the dimly lighted streets after nightfall is indescribably old-worldish and quaint ; yet this Sunday evening church-going strikes one as a fit ending to a day spent—out of the Ghetto—amid the solitude of tenantless buildings and unfrequented lanes. Eminently respectable is the City of London on Sabbath nights! This is as it should be. Other portions of the Metropolis may be as much given up to jollification on the Sabbath as they are throughout the week, when the sounds of labour are hushed ; but the work-a-day bustle and turmoil of the City find an ample compensation in the peace which, as if by virtue of so many old churches tucked away into the most unexpected corners, asserts itself on the Day of Rest.

# IV

# THE SKIRTS OF THE CITY

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A " Green " devoid of verdure—New use for a Sessions House—Vanished pictorial tavern signs—Historic associations of the Baptist's Head, St. John's Lane—A novel saloon attraction—A notable catering landmark—Granite obelisks at the City boundary—The second oldest licence in London—Archæological " finds "—A little-known postal address—The hut in " The Postmen's Park "— Survival of an ancient signboard —Old Street—A parochial convivial haunt—The Stone House Tavern——The Falstaff Music Hall—Primitive Variety Theatres—The Hall of Science—Wesley's Chapel, City Road—Bunhill Fields Burial Ground—The Honourable Artillery Company—Finsbury Pavement—The Star Tavern—The Alexandra Trust—The Sturt Arms, New North Road—Ancient London Almshouses—The Jeffrye Museum, Kingsland Road —Tavern signs in Bethnal Green Road—Sunday market crowds in Brick Lane—" Home Sweet Home " and decrepit furniture—The Sclatter Street Bird Fair—Cycle parts in Cygnet Street—Dog dealers and " finders " in Club Row.

CLERKENWELL has not yet quite recovered from the devastating effects of the war. Here and there heaped-up rubble still bears witness to an aerial bombardment which laid whole rows of habitations low; and withal the hard-surfaced Green presents the same woe-begone aspect that for upwards of half a century we have known it to do. It would, indeed, require a lively imagination to picture this great open space—the nearest to the City and therefore the earliest to be encroached upon by the speculative builder—as a charmingly rural retreat, covered with verdure and flanked by noble trees where youth and age found their highest enjoyment in assembling after the labours of the day within a short distance of home. Since our previous visit to the district, now given largely up to industries other than clockmaking, the Sessions House, built in the year 1782, has become the administrative offices of the

Holborn Union, and the long-closed commodious tavern named after it at the corner of Clerkenwell Road a wholesale and manufacturing optician's warehouse. Moreover, as if there must always be a prominent notice board exposed to public view, one actually finds to-day a church for sale !

To the intense regret of a host of Clerkenwellians, who were wont to admire it, the monster oil painting of a lioness attacking the Exeter Mail Coach at Winterslow, near Salisbury, on October 20, 1816, which formerly adorned the frontage of the Coach and Horses in St. John's Square, has not been replaced since the " house " underwent a thorough renovation. Local report that this fine piece of work was appropriated at the time by Messrs. Whitbread & Co. for a mural embellishment of their brewery in Chiswell Street—where also the pictorial sign of the vanished Jack of Newbury in the same busy street may be seen—can go a very little way towards allaying popular dissatisfaction.

In its redecorated guise the Baptist's Head, so called in compliment to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem at the near-by Priory, of which the gate alone remains, in St. John's Lane, is now an exceedingly attractive resort. Here, too, the disappearance of the pictorial signboard of the head of St. John the Baptist on a charger, no one knows whither, at the rebuilding of the original tavern, is greatly to be deplored. Another distinctive feature of the old tavern, viz. a carved stone chimney-piece with the arms of the Radcliff and Forster families—attesting its evolution out of the town mansion of a famous Elizabethan judge, Sir John Forster, who passed away under its roof in the year 1612—has happily been preserved. The proximity of the Baptist's Head to the office of the *Gentleman's Magazine* made it convenient for the refreshment of Dr. Johnson, and occasionally he had with him

Oliver Goldsmith and that ill-fated genius, Richard Savage. In later years, when unconvicted prisoners passed through St. John's Lane to or from the new Clerkenwell House of Detention to Newgate, they were privileged to halt at the Baptist's Head for a drink. A copy of an old engraving from the "Old Bailey Registers" which hangs in the bar-parlour illustrates this custom very clearly.

Strikingly contrasted with old-time associations, a short stroll up St. John's Road to the comfortable saloon of the Coach and Horses would reveal a unique example of a tavern-keeper's ingenuity to provide a grateful "eye-rest" for habitués and chance droppers-in. With rather less than ten square feet to work upon, his realization of a natural fernery, embracing ferns, wild flowers, a fountain, rustic steps, and a fish-pool, has proved in the highest degree delightful.

Though not quite so pronounced as they were under the previous ownership, the legends on outer woodwork and window cards appertaining to hot luncheons, cold meals, dainty food snacks, and a willingness to serve tea or coffee as readily and courteously as alcoholic beverages, the Hat and Feathers, at the corner of Clerkenwell and Goswell Roads, still merits to be acclaimed as a reformed public-house *par excellence*. Mr. H. C. Taylor's arrangements went much farther. In a special small room he provided writing materials, directories, and railway time-tables, two or three reference works, and the free use of the telephone. Such conveniences speak volumes for service which always meets with appreciation. Let us fondly hope that, whoever its licensee may be, the erstwhile "Taylor's Corner," the habitat of "The Man with an Idea," will continue to assert itself in the district as an up-to-date catering landmark.

Less than a minute's walk down Goswell Road leads

us to the Shakespeare, the only tavern so designated in the City and, with the exception of the Shakespeare's Head in Percival Street, Clerkenwell, within a mile or two around it. Farther southwards, the City Boundary Tavern explains to a stranger the significance of the two granite obelisks at the end of Fann Street marking the limits of the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor. Having wandered so far in the direction of the General Post Office it may be well to state that Shakespeare's undoubted association with the original tavern on the site of the Raglan Hotel, which runs the White Hart (Whitehead's) in Bishopsgate very close as the oldest licensed house in London, might with full warranty have been named after "The Bard," at the time of the rebuilding of the Bush in the year 1855, instead of the renowned Crimean Field-Marshal. Remaining in exactly the same condition as they were in Shakespeare's day, the vast cellars contain vestiges of the Roman wall and the foundations of the City gate. Everyone may not know that the specific postal address of the Raglan is 61, St. Martin-le-Grand, being situated next door to the commencement of Aldersgate Street. Incidentally, too, it should be noted that the hut in the pleasant "Postmen's Park," adjoining St. Botolph's Church opposite, sets forth a great number of inscriptions relating to brave deeds and examples of noble self-sacrifice whereby citizens of all ages lost their lives. Also that the rebuilt White Horse Tavern overlooking the old churchyard in Little Britain has the original pictorial sign suspended from a chaste wrought-iron bracket on the façade.

Old (or Aeld) Street—so called by the Saxons because it was the great Roman military road from west to east, and thence, after crossing the River Lea at Old Ford, through Stratford to Colchester—yields us but little of interest in the matter of public refreshment. At the

sign of the St. Luke's Head we may feel sure the churchwardens and bell-ringers of the parish of olden time forgathered to make merry. The Stone House occupies the site of an ancient Watch House built with some of the stones that encumbered the ground after the Lord Protector Somerset had demolished St. John's Priory, Clerkenwell, for the express purpose of utilizing its stones for the erection of his sumptuous palace in the Strand.

A few doors from the corner of Goswell Road, on the north side, there formerly stood the Falstaff Tavern, in connection with which was a primitive music-hall open only on Monday and Saturday nights, having a stage and footlights and presided over by a chairman to announce " turns " of a decidedly amateurish character. Admission being " by refreshment ticket," patrons could be relied upon to spend a great deal more for extra drinks in the course of the show. Of such resorts there were many round the Town : the Griffin (now the London Music Hall), at Shoreditch ; the Alma, in Hoxton ; the Rosemary Branch, on Stepney Green ; the Grave Maurice, in Whitechapel Road ; and " Harry Wallace's Music Hall," in Blackfriars Road—to name but a few. Like the " Free-and-Easies," all these " went under " contemporaneous with the rise of the Moss and Stoll " Empires." The once well-known " Hall of Science," identified with Charles Bradlaugh and " Judge and Jury Entertainments," towards the City Road extremity of Old Street, is now a factory.

Way down the City Road, Wesley's House and Chapel and Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, where, among a score of other celebrities, Daniel Defoe, the author of *Robinson Crusoe*, and John Bunyan were laid to rest, assuredly should not escape visitation by a stranger " doing " London. Good citizens will scarcely need to

be reminded that the Honourable Artillery Company, whose practice ground and armoury are hidden away behind tall houses facing Finsbury Square, is the lineal descendant of the City Train-Bands which played so important a part in Cromwell's Army during the Civil War, and may consequently be regarded as the most ancient body of volunteer fighting men in England. The name of Finsbury Pavement expresses the first London thoroughfare where the paving of the sidewalk with flagstones was introduced.

Retracing our steps along the City Road, and after halting for refreshment at that superbly appointed tavern-restaurant, the Star, at Old Street corner, we recall the great variety of cheap dishes obtainable by clerks and artisans at the Alexandra Trust, and also a cosy tavern a short distance up the New North Road, the sign of which would at once arrest the attention of a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Briefly told : the Sturt Arms pays honour to an eminent English explorer, Sir Charles Sturt—born 1795, died 1869—who discovered the Darling River, the Murray River, and Lake Alexandrina in Australia, and later led an expedition into the interior. As a memorial of these achievements Mount Sturt, in the Gawler Range, South Australia, was named after him.

Many years ago the late Sir Walter Besant used his powerful pen, and quite successfully, for the preservation of the Trinity Almshouses in Mile End Road. Close to these are the Almshouses of the Vintners' Company. Elsewhere not unpicturesque havens of rest for the aged have been razed to the ground and modern buildings have taken their place, with the result that Londoners no longer behold concrete expressions of ancient forms of charity. Notable exceptions are, of course, the Licensed Victuallers' Benevolent Institution in Asylum

Road, Peckham, and the Bakers' Almshouses at Leyton. One can only assume the removal of the inmates of various other rows of tenements into the open country away from the roar and bustle of the Great City. This, indeed, has fallen to the happy lot of the recipients of the pious benefaction of Sir Robert Jeffrye, Lord Mayor and Master of the Ironmongers' Company in the days of Queen Anne. Surveying the now vacated almhouses in Kingsland Road, even the usually well-informed citizen might never suspect them—with the party-walls taken down—to house a fine collection of woodcraft and cognate examples of domestic art, covering the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. These consist entirely of period furniture, and the fitments of interesting old buildings which the London County Council has striven to preserve. With a statement that they include the staircase of Boswell's house in Great Queen Street, demolished to make way for the Connaught Rooms in the year 1917, we must leave the Jeffrye Museum to the whole-hearted attention of Londoners, in whom an appreciation of things appertaining to the past is more or less pronounced.

Uncommon tavern signs characterize the long stretch of Bethnal Green Road. Amongst them are the Van Tromp, the Knave of Clubs, the Blade Bone, the Flower Pot, the Salmon and Ball, and the Well and Bucket. A large encaustic-tile painting of "Club Row in Former Days" beside the entrance to the last-named "house" gives rise to the reflection that Petticoat Lane is not the only East End Sunday market. On a smaller scale perhaps, yet even more instructive to a casual visitor, must be the many-sided nature of a Gentile bartering *locale* in and around the northern portion of Brick Lane, where Shoreditch and Spitalfields parishes meet. Farther than the Brick Lane railway bridge alien Jews rarely

wander. As strange names and Hebrew characters portend, their shops extend southwards through Osborn Street into Whitechapel, and their sweating dens are everywhere right and left. Those who are not hard at work will be found grouped round a man with a book in Goulston Street, either seeking a change of masters or making their first appearance in the hiring market.

In the upper half of Brick Lane a paternal local government allows, or ancient usage justifies, Sunday trading for the benefit of the Christian community. While butchers, bakers, and provision dealers transact a brisk business, the stalls and barrows in the crowded roadway are laden with articles of feminine wear. Cast-off gowns, boots, shoes, corsets, blouses, skirts, petticoats, hats, feathers (all very fine and large), lace, ribbons, handkerchiefs, muffs, fur tippets, sheetings, remnants of dress lengths—everything in fact which comes within the purview of the second-hand wardrobe dealer and the cheap linendraper—may be bargained for here up to one o'clock on a Sunday morning. After that hour the policeman intimates to all and sundry that it is time to "move on." The juxtaposition of new and old goods strikes a looker-on as not a little amusing. In and out of season anything that was once fashionable attracts the female fancy. Brick Lane is essentially a poor woman's bazaar.

The continuation of the Lane beyond its intersection by Bethnal Green Road presents fresh features. Here there are no shops, but disposed about the pavement domestic ornaments and utensils, old pictures, rusty fenders, and decrepit furniture may be said to constitute its "leading line." "Easy" chairs with the springs protruding, couches painfully revealing the stuffing, chests of drawers wanting knobs or a leg, damaged washhand-stands, overmantels with pieces of the wood-

work knocked off or the quicksilver suggesting a bad attack of the smallpox at some remote period of their history, worn-out carpets and linoleum, and other wretched household effects may, one opines, have to wait long for ready purchasers.

In the Hare and Bacon Streets sections of the Brick Lane Sunday Fair the barrow loads are of a most heterogeneous character, recalling parts of Middlesex Street. Everything mentionable, from old ironware to an electric battery or a gramophone, can be picked up here. In the roadway itself vendors of quack medicines, pills, ointments, herbal remedies, furniture polishes, verdigris and stain removers, and other wondrous preparations expend their loquacity upon reluctant buyers.

In Sclatter Street we are in the thick of the Bird Fair. The twittering of birds, the cooing of pigeons, the screeching of parrots and the hubbub of a multitude of human voices assail our ears. Most of the shops have wire or wicker cages hung on their fronts high overhead. The shops themselves one cannot approach, so dense is the throng, pushing and elbowing its way between them and the hutches, crates, and boxes piled up in the gutter. These contain chiefly fowls and ducks, but also rabbits, guinea-pigs, and tortoises. We move along with extreme difficulty in the roadway. Facing us on either hand, shoulder to shoulder, in places three or four deep, are men and boys eager to sell a cage-bird, a pair of pigeons, or an old hen. Some stand mute, piteous, and forlorn; the rest emulate the persistent dealers behind them in crying attention to their merchandise. Sellers of bird foods, clasp-knives, razors, bootlaces, blacking, collar-studs, pocket-books, stationery packets, picture post-cards never exhibited in shop-windows, and other cheap articles help to rend the air with their vociferation. Nor is the sporting tipster unknown in Bird Fair. The

prevalent odour of a hundred fowl-houses and contact with forbidding working clothes tend to make the area traversed far from pleasant.

Cygnet Street, a short turning on the right, is a mart of a very different kind. Here second-hand bicycle parts and accessories are the commodities offered for sale. Amateur repairers of machines that have been disabled or knocked out of shape in a collision make this their happy hunting ground. Nowhere else can such an assortment of wheels, tyres, gear-cases, handle-bars, brakes, lamps, pedals, and ball-bearings be met with. A few insignificant mortals have old locks, keys, door-bolts, tools, and other oddments exposed to view on convenient door-steps and window ledges ; but Cygnet Street appeals specially to wheelmen. A complete rideable machine has never been known to court custom. Where these stall and barrow men hail from or obtain their stock-in-trade is a mystery. The cycle-repairing shopkeepers uniformly regard them as the scum of the industry.

To the Dog Fanciers' Fair in the adjacent Club Row we could devote a lively description were it in the slightest degree necessary. The average Londoner who has never heard of such a hebdomadal gathering must be classed with the country excursionist who knows not "Dirty Dick's." Of all the sordid aspects of Sunday trading on the skirts of the City this is at once the most interesting and humanizing. Making a direct appeal to lovers of dumb animals, whether in the hope of recovering, at a price to be haggled over, a "lost, stolen, or strayed" pet of the canine species—which the police do *not* systematically cause to be put in a lethal chamber—or with the object of purchasing what a kindly heart yearns for, the great open space hard by Bishopsgate Station attracts visitors from every quarter of the Metropolis. There stand the dealers of the cloth cap and muffler

type, with teams of dogs on leads, smaller dogs carried in their arms, and pups stuffed in their pockets. While some of the fraternity are genuine " sports," able to sell pedigrees with thoroughbreds, others, of a more questionable class, though they never *steal* dogs, earn a comfortable livelihood by " finding " them.

# V

# DOCKLAND AND CHINATOWN

# V

## DOCKLAND AND CHINATOWN

Divers nationalities from Asia's Seas—Hardy Norsemen—The Dock House Tavern, Poplar—Other well-frequented resorts—*God Bless our Sailor Prince*—The Queen's Palace of Varieties, High Street—The Sun and Sawyers—Shipmates' resorts—The Horn of Plenty—Monster signs of the White Horse and "The People's Butcher"—The "Chee-Kung-Tong: Chinese Freemason Society"—Pennyfields and Limehouse Causeway—Characteristics of London's Chinatown—Gambling and the household "joss"—The Steam Packet Tavern—A skittle alley at the Royal Sovereign—The Silver Lion—The Oporto Tavern—The Jamaica Hotel—Curiosities from many lands at the Railway Tavern—"The Sailor and his Lass"—Lusty's Turtle Store and Kitchen in Parham Street—City "guzzling"—The Brunswick Hotel—The Old Barge Office—The Grapes, Limehouse Reach—The Vine Inn—The Turk's Head, Wapping—The Prospect of Whitby—The Town of Ramsgate—Wapping Old Stairs—Ratcliff Cross.

ROUND Dockland there is always colour of a kind. Essentially local, and therefore utterly dissimilar to that encountered elsewhere, it proves absorbingly interesting to the Londoner on a quest of discovery away from his usual haunts. Beyond the Jewish quarter, Stepney and the Eastern Hotel at Limehouse, the West India Dock Road affords him, if not actually the scents and the glamour of the Orient, at least a nodding acquaintance with a diversity of strange nationalities whose ordinary avocations take them down to Asia's seas in ships. While the Chinese have a colony to themselves, the rest, consisting of Malays, Hindus, South Sea Islanders, and East Africans waiting to sign on for their next voyage, find temporary accommodation in seemingly mean side streets, or, if their funds are low, at the Strangers' Home, where each individual inmate can cook and enjoy his own food with special prayers said

over the meal by an appointed priest, according to the ritual which race and creed impose upon him, since Lascars and Hindus, for example, may not eat together. In this cosmopolitan thoroughfare, too, will be found various eating-houses for hardy Norsemen, likewise Sons of the Sea, who spend much of their time ashore at the Scandinavian Reading Room in Pennyfields. Before exploring this neighbourhood, however, we shall do well to make a perambulation of the district leading direct thereto.

Readily accessible from all parts of London, the Poplar entrance, beside the East India Dock gates, to the Blackwall Tunnel at once puts us on the right track. Also, described as "The Old Rum House," the Dock House Tavern immediately opposite bears upon its façade a notification cut in stone of having been "Established for the sale of genuine wines and spirits, A.D. 1805." Close at hand the Sir John Franklin and the Volunteer resound no less to the hum of business during all permissible hours. The unique signboard of the Recreation Tavern strikes the true note of harmless necessary jollity, while that of the Sailor King, seen across the Tunnel Arch, testifies to the affection formerly borne by the people of England for William IV, who had made the sea his home.

Robin Hood Lane yields us nothing of interest until we turn the corner into the narrow High Street, Poplar. Here, though taverns abound, pedestrians are but few, trade seems to be singularly stagnant, and only the opening of the twice-nightly show at the Queen's Palace of Varieties brings about a general awakening from its lethargy. This old-time amusement resort has had a somewhat chequered history. Originally a dockers' "free-and-easy" in the bar-parlour of the Queen's Arms Tavern, its first stage of development was the

Apollo Music Hall. Next, contemporaneous with a considerable rearward extension, it became the Oriental Theatre ; later, a fresh wooing of Dame Fortune suggested the style of the Royal Alfred, and anon yet another, the Albion. Sad to relate, the Drama never flourished in any portion of Dockland farther east than populous Whitechapel, and so the luckless Albion Theatre returned to its first-love, Varieties, which nowadays appear to captivate the local workers' taste.

Of the many convivial haunts in the High Street some half-dozen only call for mention. The amplified sign of the Sun and Sawyers arose out of the business venture of two sawyers who took over the tavern already known as the Sun. As usual in such cases, the idea was to court the patronage of their own particular class of workmen. The Resolute and the Arethusa keep up the good old custom so prevalent in seaport towns of attracting sailors by the names of ships associated with maritime enterprise or a great naval victory. The Horn of Plenty is a pleasant-sounding sign suggestive of Nature's gifts—an obvious variant of the Cornucopia. The huge figure of a White Horse on the forecourt post of an old inn to which it gives a name affords us an excellent example of the plastic art ; while the Prince Alfred, at the opposite corner, serves as an additional reminder of the once popular song, *God Bless our Sailor Prince*. Across the way, but a few doors from " The People's Butcher," over whose window a carved life-sized bullock's head recalls the multitudinous traders' signs of olden times, a plain building, styled " Chee-Kung-Tong : Chinese Freemason Society," thrusts itself upon one's vision. At this point of our perambulation, commencing with Kong Kee's boot-repairing shop in Pennyfields, we touch the fringe of London's Chinatown.

Despite the asseverations of imaginative writers, who,

one and all, seem to have taken their cue from the bygone ill-fame of Ratcliff Highway, we feel in duty bound, on the strength of an intimate acquaintance extending over many years, to say that the Chinese Colony "Down East" may be visited with the utmost personal safety and self-satisfying interest by any Londoner seeking a new experience. True enough, it does not appeal to the eye in the same way as its corresponding show-places of gaudily painted wooden structures in New York and San Francisco. The houses, comprising two single narrow streets, are quite ordinary, while a public "joss house," or temple, has yet to be set up. Moreover, the native costume is never seen. Even the queue, or pig-tail, is tightly wrapped round the head and so rendered inconspicuous beneath a woollen cap of decidedly Bethnal Green make. A Chinese woman in trousers may not be distinguished anywhere, for the simple reason that its permanent residents of the trading and lodging-house keeping class have taken to themselves lawful English wives.

Limehouse Causeway and Pennyfields consist almost wholly of provision stores, restaurants, and boarding-houses for mariners hailing from "The Flowery Land." Some idea of the commercial importance of the first-named may be gathered from the statement that they supply all the Chinese Legations of Europe with comestibles imported by them. Uncouth names and hieroglyphic inscriptions embellish each shop-front alike. Here are to be obtained the rarest delicacies, birds' nests not excepted. Preserved fruits, soys, curries, condiments, ginger, spices, medicines, Canton pills for counteracting the effects of the opium habit (perhaps not so much in request since a ban has been put on the use of the drug), soap in bars, candles, macaroni, the finest wheat-meal, the best Patna rice, and real China tea brought

overland as far as the Baltic, summarize their stock-in-trade. Most important of all is the bean oil for the Sacred Lamp, without which no Chinese dwelling would bear thought of.

In one general store a native baker will be found at work on a huge pasteboard, or at the kneading-trough. The restaurant and lodging-house windows are chiefly noticeable for dingy chintz curtains, China vases, undecipherable devices, and pastry of virgin whiteness. As to the food fare, everything on the menus of the Chinese restaurants of Piccadilly Circus and Oxford Street can be commanded, and naturally at much lower prices. In their cooking the Celestials are scrupulously clean and careful ; they never buy a dead fowl, but fatten and kill it themselves. Taking the place of our vegetables, rice goes with everything. By means of a pair of chopsticks the diner helps himself to the " chopped food," i.e. chicken, fowl, or duck chopped through into " fingers," and so conveys it to his mouth. Roast pork, cut into slices and eaten with a piquant sauce, is a favourite Chinatown dish, and by far the most popular, " chop-suey." This consists of macaroni, fish-balls, small portions of lean pork, and breast of chicken well boiled together in an enormous copper saucepan. Let it be noted that the Chinese use only copper utensils for culinary purposes. That is why, as a race, they escape cholera and other Asiatic scourges, despite the unsanitary conditions of their overcrowded towns, since copper destroys all disease germs. Tea-drinking from a china bowl, *sans* milk or sugar, may not meet with marked appreciation by Europeans at the first sampling.

Due perhaps to our insular prejudices, John Chinaman has been very much maligned. In novels and plays he is set forth as a trickster and a villain of the deepest

dye. Bret Harte's *Heathen Chinee* merely illustrates a type common to a " washerman " in the Far West. The good and bad of all communities may be said to exist in about equal proportions. Know one of the Yellow Race in London's Chinatown well, and he might be dubbed a jolly fine fellow. He seems to be always in funds and is generous to the degree of folly. Greatly as he affects port wine and the best brands of Scotch whisky, he never displays the slightest sign of intoxication. Not once in the course of repeated visits have we ourselves encountered or heard tell of a drunken Chinaman. Something must, however, be said in extenuation of his almost unlimited capacity for imbibing strong liquor. Fearful of incurring the wrath of his own Consul, who, after causing him to be solemnly arraigned before the " Chee-Kung-Tong," an influential body of his fellow-countrymen at the Court House in the High Street (referred to above) and recommended for deportation, he quarrels with no one, and is even more law-abiding than the alien Jew.

Since opium-smoking is now interdicted under pain of six months' imprisonment for each offence, this phase of Oriental life " Down East " may be summarily dismissed. Although cases of opium and cocaine smuggling on a large scale do occasionally come to light, the existence of a " hip-joint " anywhere round the district must be jealously guarded. All the world over the Chinaman's besetting sin is gambling. Run by a *tong* or syndicate, there are many gaming tables in Limehouse Causeway and Pennyfields, but the proceedings have latterly been quite public. If known, one may stroll in through the shop or open side-door to look on unchallenged. The first object to meet the eye is the tiny " joss house " in a corner facing the entrance. With characteristic simplicity this consists of a floating wick in

bean oil ever alight, a tablet with Chinese characters upon it, and three sweet herbs aglow at the top—" to keepee out the devil," as Pigeon English expresses its signification. Apart from ancestor worship, the domestic " joss " constitutes the sole religious rite of the Yellow Race. The gamblers stand round three sides of a high table, which hems the croupier pretty tight against the wall. The game is a kind of banker played with native coins used as counters, dominoes, and thin strips of red cardboard. So engrossed are the players in the business on hand that not a word is spoken. Neither is there the least excitement when pounds of English money fall to the winner.

Since the spread of Chinatown across West India Dock Road into Pennyfields, the Steam Packet Tavern in Park Place, just off the Causeway, has lost much of its clientèle for hasty gulps of raw whisky by the gamesters. Down to the last few years a special brand of Scotch was in great demand over the change of paper-money for the tables. In the company of the former licensee, Mr. F. R. Hill, we made our first acquaintance with the denizens of Chinatown, and much appreciated the introduction. Not very far away the Royal Sovereign, in Gill Street, has a skittle-alley at the rear, which the younger Chinese are wont to decorate into the semblance of an Eastern compound on festive occasions. Nowadays the various taverns of Pennyfields, chief amongst them the Silver Lion—another unique sign—and the Rose and Crown, command liberal patronage.

In the West India Dock Road are the Oporto Tavern, featuring " Charrington's Entire " ; the Jamaica Hotel, a favourite luncheon resort ; and the Railway Tavern. Unquestionably a visit to the last-named should be embraced in the itinerary of every Londoner making a

pleasure excursion into Dockland. From the ceiling of its great saloon way down Garford Street, and approached by several steps, hang overseas curiosities, natural and fabricated, and around the walls of the entire establishment are showcases of Oriental oddments such as at one time could only be seen in a confused state at Jamrack's in Ratcliff Highway. After nightfall this essentially foreign seamen's rendezvous, where all races, both pale and dusky, seem to forgather, is instinct with life, and the incessant babel of mixed tongues makes it difficult to make one's own voice heard. Here more than anywhere else round London would a casual visitor see how the marine toilers enjoy their hard-earned leisure.

Another place of absorbing interest, if by chance a stranger might be allowed to gain admittance thereto, is the turtle store and kitchen of John Lusty in Parham Street, Limehouse. Brought from the West Indies to the neighbouring dock, the turtles are delivered alive in vans, beheaded as required, and then boiled in huge cauldrons for three days together. When it is stated that the winter season's demand for the culinary product of these strange cargoes exceeds a hundred and fifty fat turtles per week one can form some idea of the traditional " guzzling " at a City banquet.

Our mention of the Jamaica Hotel calls to mind the days when it wore a less forlorn appearance than it does now, for though the drinking bars and the luncheon room are still open, the guest-house accommodation seems to be no longer requisitioned. Similarly fallen from its high estate is the great bay-windowed Brunswick Hotel, facing Blackwall Reach, which after generations of prosperity has at last come to be utilized as offices for the adjacent shipyard. There have long been rumours of the conversion of the Old Barge Office, the erstwhile residence of the Harbour Master at Limehouse, into a

mercantile shipping museum. If, subject to much-needed repairs and renovations, the dilapidated building can again be made to serve a useful purpose, lovers of the picturesque may feel truly thankful. Like the adjoining Vine Inn, the Old Barge Office has lent inspiration to many famous artists, Whistler among the number. From his description of Miss Abbey Potterson's haven of rest, over the half-door of which " the bar's snugness so gushed forth that, albeit customers drank there standing, in a dark and draughty passage . . . they always appeared to drink under an enchanting delusion that they were in the bar itself," one may identify the Grapes —still a watermen's retreat—at Limehouse Reach as " The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters " of Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend.* Its rearward aspect of full-bellied windows, a wooden veranda, and steps leading down to the mud at low-tide bears a close resemblance to that of the near-by Vine Inn and of the Turk's Head, the Prospect of Whitby, and the Town of Ramsgate at Wapping. The last-named tavern, beside the approach to Wapping Old Stairs, which are now arched over, when it displayed a pictorial sign of the Red Cow, was the scene of the frustration of Judge Jeffreys's design, after the abdication of James II, to escape in disguise to Hamburg.

All along the river-side from Limehouse to Wapping there are, between huge warehouses, crazy stone stairs that have played their part in London's maritime history. Ratcliff Cross Stairs was quite a famous spot in bygone days. Here, on May 10, 1553, Admiral Sir Hugh Willoughby embarked upon his adventurous voyage to discover the North-West Passage, from which he was destined never to return. The young King Edward VI gave him a brilliant send-off as his flotilla passed Greenwich Palace—then a Royal residence—with trumpets blaring and cannon saluting, but that was the last seen of

the intrepid mariner. Why a stone cross should have been erected at the head of Ratcliff Stairs, or when it was taken down, no living man can say. It is, however, on record that the accession of Queen Victoria to the Throne of England was proclaimed at Ratcliff Cross on June 20, 1837.

# VI

# BERMONDSEY AND ROTHERHITHE

# VI

## BERMONDSEY AND ROTHERHITHE

Bygone riparian haunts of pleasure—Thomas Guy and Sir Cloudesley Shovel—Hospital students at the Ship and Shovel—Maze Pond Road—A memorial of the great Tooley Street Fire—The Duke of Clarence—The Red Lion and Key—The Old Red Cock—The Antigallican—The Ship Aground, Dockhead—"Ye Goat"—The Raven and Sun—Abbey Street taverns—The Star Palace—The Jamaica, Southwark Park Road—The Colleen Bawn—The Grange and Bermondsey Abbey—Lilliput Hall, Jamaica Road—The Admiral Hawke—The Gregorian Arms—Cherry Gardens and Pier—China Hall, Lower Road, Rotherhithe—The Jolly Sailor—The Old Rock of Gibraltar—The Telegraph—The Harp of Erin—The Swan Hotel, Deptford High Street—The Pilot—The Duke of Cambridge—The Distillery—The Centurion—Deptford Bridge and the Ravensbourne.

FRAUGHT with a certain measure of regret must be the reflection that the most prosaic district in South London was once the scene of suburban junketings and the common pleasure-ground of the people. A saunter round Bermondsey to-day scarcely conduces to the thought that on the site of a great abbey, second only in importance to St. Peter's at Westminster, there arose an extensive spa, with grottos and summer arbours, which attracted the lads and lasses of the outlying villages of Newington, Walworth, Camberwell, and Peckham, or that within living memory the Cherry Gardens, where rum was first landed from the West Indies, had been the objective of jaded Londoners on a down-river excursion ever since the time of Pepys and Evelyn. To these recreative resorts the names of Spa Road, Abbey Street, Jamaica Road, and Cherry Garden Street with its Pier bear testimony. Nor was this all. In connection with an ancient tavern local nomenclature carries us still farther back in spirit to the halcyon days

of yore, when life could be taken much more leisurely than falls to the lot of the average twentieth-century citizen.

For sheer pride of location amid historic surroundings the Ship and Shovel, at the corner of Maze Pond Terrace, is without a compeer in the Metropolitan area. True enough, the Bricklayers' Arms and "Ye Olde Tabard" Inns are better known by far on account of their respective associations with great naval commanders and the Canterbury Pilgrims; but, while intrinsically interesting in themselves, they do not, like the sequestered "house of call" way down the narrow turning alongside Guy's Hospital, conjure up memories of pleasant fields and meadows, bleating sheep and browsing kine, shady walks, a clear stream spanned by a stone bridge, a monster labyrinth or maze, and a stretch of ornamental water with ducks and swans, the existence of which is perpetuated by the name of Great Maze Pond, close to the Ship and Shovel. Anciently the whole of the region from this point eastward to Horsleydown and Rotherhithe comprised the landed estate of the Abbots of Battle, in Sussex, whose town house stood on the site of the present Battle Bridge Lane, off Tooley Street, and who utilized the watercourse for grinding their own corn in a near-by windmill formerly identified by Mill Lane.

Until the Huguenots settled in England this was the only dwelling to mar the prospect. Then the work of upheaval commenced in real earnest. Little by little the vernal sward, the shady walks, and the field-paths became parcelled out into tanyards with unsightly sheds appertaining to the hide and skin industry. The ground having thus been broken, these were destined to develop into huge warehouses as we behold them to-day, and anon both the Maze and the Pond vanished, leaving

naught but names to tell the tale of bygone natural beauty. As seen from the corner of St. Thomas's Street and Great Maze Pond, the garden portion of the Ship and Shovel, with its spreading plane tree and dove-cotes and gold-lettered signboard surmounting the wall, affords a welcome relief to the eye amid the dreary wilderness of bricks and mortar. With the exceptions of the Students' Quarters and the Catering Department of the Hospital, every building for a long distance round about seems to have stood for centuries ; while the row of tenements comprising Maze Pond Terrace conveys the impression of having been evolved out of St. Thomas's Charity School, as proclaimed by a stone tablet (1781) facing the public bars of the Ship and Shovel. At what precise period the Maze Pond was filled in cannot now be determined, but there exists no doubt that the comfortable tavern, dating back to the year 1667, skirted its western extremity, perhaps a little too close to the water's edge, if one may judge from sagging floors about the domicile.

Equally unquestionable is the association of Thomas Guy with the Ship and Shovel. As the son of a lighterman and coal-dealer of Horsleydown, he could hardly have disdained to hold converse with its habitués ; and it is quite feasible that, discovering the cosy parlour to be the regular haunt of St. Thomas's Hospital students, whose names are rough-cut on the centuries-old oak table still used there, he in after years, when successful trading and speculation had made him a rich man, formed the pious resolution of founding and endowing a hospital of his own which the Ship and Shovel might overlook. At all events Guy's Hospital became an accomplished fact, and to-day its hatless students muster in the self-same parlour just as those attached to the monastic foundation did down to the time of its removal,

first to temporary premises at Newington (1862) and on June 21, 1871, to the Albert Embankment. Not always, however, was the snug tavern known by its present name. Prior to the loss of Sir Cloudesley Shovel's flagship with all hands off the Scilly Isles on October 22, 1707, it displayed the sign of the Pig and Whistle. Thereupon, for the special reason that the great English admiral had spent much of his time at the trim-built rendezvous beside the Maze Pond when on land, calling it *his ship*, and often expressing a desire of taking up his quarters there permanently after his retirement from active service, the licensee needed little persuasion to make him adopt the ingenious sign of the Ship and Shovel.

In Tooley Street dwelt the three tailors who addressed a petition to the House of Commons grandiloquently commencing, "We, the people of England." By a process calculated to puzzle the most astute phonetic scholar, the name of this busy thoroughfare has been perverted out of all semblance to that of the parish church (St. Olave) dedicated to St. Olaf, the first Christian King of Norway, a contemporary of our own Ethelred II (the Unready). As one of their "Anchor Taverns," the Mitre affords us a felicitous example of superior public-house reform for which Messrs. Barclay, Perkins & Co., Ltd., merit commendation. Whereas formerly there was the usual subdivision of bars, we now behold an elegant saloon lounge with a buffet, little round tables, and wicker chairs. Though left unmentioned in the guide-books and completely ignored by pedestrians hastening past it, a richly carved memorial stone of the Great Tooley Street Fire in which Captain James Braidwood, the chief of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, lost his life on June 22, 1861, at the corner of Hay's Wharf, is well worthy of a minute survey.

Like the Grapes, the Three Tuns, and some other generic signs of vinous import, the Duke of Clarence must be adjudged a quite appropriate designation for a convivial haunt on account of the drowning of the unhappy brother of Edward IV in a butt of Malmsey in the Tower of London. A short distance down Battle Bridge Lane stands the Red Lion and Key Tavern, obviously a corruption of the Red Lion on the Quay when the water-side was devoid of tall warehouses. A similarly time-honoured rendezvous for thirsty souls pursuing their daily avocations along this portion of the Thames is the Old Red Cock. The Antigallican deserves a passing mention as one of the two surviving taverns in London so denominated where the Anti-gallican Societies, sworn foes of " the frog-eating Frenchman," met during the Napoleonic Wars. A glance to the left at Dockhead, before turning sharply off into Jamaica Road on the right, brings into view the fine pictorial signboard of the Ship Aground—a tavern without cellars, because it stands on the verge of the river, which was at one time a famous—or perhaps infamous—smugglers' haunt.

A quaintly old-fashioned resort with a carved sign on the frontage is " Ye Goat " in Lafone Street, off Tower Bridge Road. Near-by, in Tanner Street, is the Raven and Sun, which combination of signs denotes a " house of call," the Raven, taken over by a licensee who had made himself highly popular at the Sun, in another transpontine district.

The King John's Head, the Royal George, the Fleece and the Star and Garter in Abbey Street, always had their full complement of patrons when the crowds of holiday-makers flocked to the neighbouring Bermondsey Spa and availed themselves of pass-out checks for stronger refreshment than they could obtain on the spot. Curiously

enough, this was the only one of London's alfresco resorts not associated with a tavern. Adjoining the last-named, and, until it 'verted to "Pictures" some years before the war, embraced in the same property with a full drink licence, the Star Palace as an old-time music-hall had been in the possession of three generations of the Hart family. Deriving its title from the once celebrated riparian resort in the Cherry Gardens, the Jamaica Tavern, in Southwark Park Road, is a modern establishment, while the Colleen Bawn recalls the popularity of Dion Boucicault's Irish drama at the Adelphi Theatre. The Grange, in the road named after it, still betrays habitation, and near-by were the great gates of Bermondsey Abbey.

Lilliput Hall, in Jamaica Road, came into existence soon after the publication of Dean Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, when a troupe of performing midgets took up their quarters in the large room over the ornate-fronted tavern for a prolonged season. The Admiral Hawke perpetuates the memory of a celebrated naval commander who was raised to the peerage in the year 1776. Much older by whole centuries is the sign of the Gregorian Arms. Here in pre-Reformation days the cantors of the adjacent parish church of St. James made merry. It may not be common knowledge that despite those beautiful Masses, distinguished by rich scientific harmonies and specially composed for the Romish ritual of which Giovanni Palestrina gave us the earliest examples, the Gregorian chants are still regarded with favour in many Catholic churches.

Cherry Garden Street leads to the Cherry Tree Tavern and the Cherry Gardens Pier, where the Greenwich steamboats formerly set down and took up passengers. On the same spot, when styled Cherry Garden Stairs, West Indian rum and Spanish wines were first landed

for the London market. The Cherry Garden was a famous place of entertainment in Restoration days, and it retained something of its old character down to our own time. Pepys paid it a visit on June 15, 1664, affirming in his *Diary* that he " came home by water, singing merrily." The Jamaica Tavern, euphemistically dubbed " Rum Quay," was said to have been one of the numerous residences for a short while of Oliver Cromwell. As described by the author of *Fly Leaves* (1854), it presented almost the same features as when tenanted by the Protector. " The carved quatrefoils and flowers upon the staircase beams," he wrote, " the old-fashioned fastenings of the doors—' locks, bolts, and bars '—the huge single gable (which in a modern house would be double), all are in keeping, and the glimmer of the gas, by which the old and ruinous kitchen into which we strayed was dimly lighted, seemed to ' pale its ineffectual fires ' in striving to illuminate the old black settles and still older wainscot." In Pepys's day this common tap of the Cherry Garden bore the name of Jamaica House. Hither he brought his wife and her maids for an outing on Sunday, April 14, 1667. The entry in the *Diary* runs thus : " Over the water to Jamaica House, where I never was before, and then the girls did run wagers on the bowling green, and there with much pleasure spent little, and so home."

Another once well-frequented down-river resort alluded to by the genial diarist was China Hall. Displaying the same lettered sign in the Lower Road, Rotherhithe, its tavern frontage still exists, but the pleasant tea-gardens at the rear have long been supplanted by a timber yard in connection with the Surrey Commercial Docks. As a " house of entertainment " with a music-room and porcelain or chinaware embellishments the place appears to have attracted a goodly con-

course of summer-tide visitors. Midway in the year 1777 it became a theatre, the prices of admission being three shillings to the boxes, two shillings to the pit, and one shilling to the gallery. Seeing that these were not less than the regular West End playhouse charges, we are left to infer that the light-comedy performances at China Hall, involving an agreeable trip in a Thames wherry, with " a jolly young waterman " plying the oars, made the same appeal to Londoners of the time as Ranelagh and Vauxhall. Unfortunately, just when the afterwards celebrated actor, George Frederick Cooke, fresh from the provinces, had brought to the theatre an added prestige, viz. during the autumn of the following year, it was burned down and never rebuilt. Thereupon the entire ground-plot of China Hall assumed the usual characteristics of a pleasure garden with " tea boxes " and refreshment tables, and in addition a great veranda attached to the rear wall of the present-day tavern.

Proceeding along the Lower Road and Evelyn Street towards Deptford we encounter a tavern sign of the plastic order, the Jolly Sailor, and one executed in profile, of a Huntsman leaping a five-barred gate. Like so many others, the Old Rock of Gibraltar and the Telegraph commemorate important contemporary events—the first-named that of the futile siege of Gibraltar by the French and Spanish fleets from July 1779 to February 1783. The Harp of Erin, displaying a green Irish harp, at the corner, and the Noah's Ark, immediately opposite, lead us to the foot of Deptford High Street, where the Swan Hotel, with a large white swan on its summit, occupies a considerable stretch of ground way down Edward Street. An encaustic-tile embellishment of the principal entrance to the Pilot has for its subject " The Destruction of the Spanish Armada " ; the Duke of Cambridge, containing an attractive saloon lounge, makes a brave corner show of

the life-sized figure of a modern commander-in-chief who, on a certain occasion, postponed an inspection on account of torrential rain, thus giving the Comic Press of the time a rare opportunity of depicting him with an umbrella ; while The Distillery, at No. 45, across the way, might almost be said to boast the briskest counter trade in the environs of London. A short distance eastwards of the Centurion Tavern, so designated after the frigate in which Captain (later Admiral) Anson made his memorable voyage round the globe, is Deptford Bridge, where the Ravensbourne River, the natural boundary of the twain counties of Surrey and Kent, empties itself between prosaic mills and warehouses into Deptford Creek and the Thames.

# VII

# ROUND COVENT GARDEN

# VII

## ROUND COVENT GARDEN

London's first residential square—Origin of the Market—The Piazza, the habitat of celebrated painters—George Robins, auctioneer—"The Tavistock Breakfast Rooms"—The Tavistock Hotel—The Piazza Coffee House and Tavern—The Shakespeare's Head—George Lambert and the Beefsteak Club—The Bedford Coffee House—Button's—Tom's—Dr. Johnson in Covent Garden—Tom Davis's Bookshop—A notorious "Night House"—Powell's Marionettes—Introduction of English Pantomime—The miscalled "Drury Lane Theatre"—Originator of "The Richardson's Show"—The Sheridan Knowles Tavern—The new Fortune Theatre, Russell Street—Origin of the expression "A 'go' of gin"—The Opera Hotel, Bow Street—The author of *Tom Jones*—Bow Street Runners—Introduction of the Metropolitan Police—"Bobbies" and "Peelers"—Will's Coffee House.

THERE are fairer London areas to survey, after the early-morning business of the Market has ended, than the one which lies between Long Acre and the Strand, but few, if any, have established a better claim to veneration on account of pleasant memories. When Thackeray coined the familiar phrase "The Joyous Neighbourhood of Covent Garden," he had in mind his own intimate acquaintance with its rollicking tavern life, and trustworthy records of the most famous coffee-houses of the reigns of William and Mary and Queen Anne. Within "The Seven Acres"—a term once applied to the entire district filched from the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields—is centred the social, literary, and dramatic history of two centuries. Going still farther back, the great Square itself and the streets issuing out of it, like Drury Lane and Bow Street, contained the residences of well-to-do people.

Covent Garden first came into prominence as a fashionable quarter through the setting up in the north-

east portion of the Piazza, precisely at the corner of the present James Street, embraced in the Tavistock Hotel, of the studio of Sir Peter Lely, the eminent portrait-painter, to whom the Court beauties of the Restoration period gave sittings. His successors in the realm of Art, beneath the same roof and that of the adjoining mansion, were Sir Godfrey Kneller ; Johann Zoffany, one of the original members of the Royal Academy ; Sir William Thornhill, the father-in-law of Hogarth ; and Richard Wilson, the landscape-painter. But we are anticipating.

In pre-Reformation days this vast estate was a convent garden belonging to St. Peter's Abbey at Westminster, with a high wall around it and a statue of the Virgin at the western, or Bedford Street, end, from which Maiden Lane derived its name. Although documentary evidence does not substantiate the assumption that the convent must have harboured a community of nuns, the statue just referred to and the unearthing of human bones in the course of structural alterations at the White Swan Tavern (formerly an important guest-house) in New Street, a few doors east of Bedfordbury, some years ago, lend credence to it. After the dissolution of the monasteries Edward VI bestowed the convent garden upon his uncle, the Lord Protector Somerset, and on the attainder of the latter, January 22, 1552, by which time presumably the wall and such buildings as it enclosed were levelled to the ground, it fell to the acceptance of the noble owner of Bedford House in the Strand, whose rear garden wall had long been graced with stalls for the sale of fruits and vegetables. Here, then, we trace the origin of the Market.

The story of the formation of London's first residential square is interesting. In the year 1634 Francis, the Fourth Earl of Bedford, conceived the idea of introducing

into this country the Italian *piazza*, and entrusted its accomplishment to Inigo Jones. Allowing his lordship's garden wall to remain on the south side of the vacant ground, the celebrated architect built St. Paul's Church, where so many notable personages lie buried, on the west, and along the north and north-east sides a uniform row of houses having their upper stories supported by pilasters so as to form an arcade. A similar adornment of the south-east side entered into the general plan, but this was not carried out until the Restoration, and, unfortunately a fire caused the whole of it to be laid low midway in the eighteenth century. By a strange perversity which so often dominates the English character, the continuous portico or covered way came to be styled "The Piazza," while the real *piazza*, or "open place," received the name, in common parlance, of "Covent Garden." It goes without saying that the gradual dumping down by the cottagers of Marylebone and Islington of more and more fruit and vegetable stalls, each yielding a toll or rental to the ground landlord, invested the quadrangle with the description of a market. The erection of the central market buildings by John, Duke of Bedford, took place in the year 1830.

As we have seen, the existing portion of the Piazza stretching eastwards from James Street, identified with the Tavistock Hotel, was for a considerable time the home of famous painters. Here, before Richard Wilson took possession, Hogarth exhibited his series of six pictures, "Marriage à la Mode," but, failing to find a purchaser, it eventually (1750) changed hands under the hammer for the altogether insignificant sum of £110. When the artists forsook Covent Garden, the Piazza studios became the auction rooms—the first ever heard of away from taverns and coffee-houses—of George Robins, a well-known character, whose florid style of

rostrum oratory proved a decided asset in the matter of effecting sales. Seven years after establishing himself in these eligible premises, viz. in 1787, Robins leased part

THE TAVISTOCK BREAKFAST ROOMS, 1787

of them on the east side to a Mr. Harrison for conversion into "The Tavistock Breakfast Rooms"—the beginnings of the Tavistock Hotel as we knew it. In those days the *beaux* took their walks abroad early, and many a social scandal was discussed over breakfast at the

coffee-houses. Such resorts were not lacking in and around Covent Garden, but Mr. Harrison's idea may have been to provide better accommodation and a more pleasing environment than could be found elsewhere. In his advertisements of the Tavistock Breakfast Rooms he stressed the serving of, besides the essential refreshments of tea and coffee, " excellent soups of various kinds with great neatness." The successful issue of this venture enabled him to seize the earliest opportunity of acquiring the celebrated Piazza Coffee House adjoining and incorporating it in the Tavistock Hotel of our day. On the subsequent developments of the row of mansions constituting London's acknowledged premier guest-house for gentlemen in " The Joyous Neighbourhood of Covent Garden " we need not here expatiate. Let us rather express our regret that, like the Hummums Hotel, the time-honoured institution has at last had to make way for increased market-produce accommodation.

The Piazza Coffee House, or, according to its early nineteenth-century description, " The Piazza Coffee House and Tavern," was the favourite haunt of Richard Brinsley Sheridan and his associates. Here, when a friend brought him the news of the burning of Drury Lane Theatre, of which he shared the management with John Philip Kemble, he avowed full knowledge of the disaster, but declined to move, saying, " Surely a man may be allowed to take a glass of wine by his own fireside ! " A great parlour attraction at the Piazza in the estimation of all classes of men was the marvellous talent displayed by a young singer named Theodore Hook for improvisation. This so impressed Sheridan that he introduced the artiste into fashionable circles, and thus launched him upon a brilliant career as a Society entertainer.

A praiseworthy attempt to invest the Piazza Coffee

House with all the importance of a well-regulated tavern many years before it rejoiced in the dual designation, was made by Charles Macklin (real name, MacLaughlin), the actor, whose magnificent portrayal of the character of Shylock inspired Pope's line, "This is the Jew that Shakespeare drew." Having achieved fame and earned a competence when little past middle age, he retired from the stage and sought a fresh phase of activity by becoming the host of the Piazza Coffee House, there providing a four-o'clock "ordinary" at three shillings, inclusive of wine. For a time this innovation, enhanced by his own appearance in Court dress to bring in the first dish and say Grace, gave promise of wide appreciation; but the company did not take at all kindly to his post-prandial lectures on Oratory, Declamation, Shakespeare, and the Drama. Within a few months, in January 1755, he was adjudged a bankrupt, whereupon the Piazza Coffee House knew him no more. Returning to the scene of his triumphs, he again hit the public taste, and lived to be a centenarian, dying in the year 1795. Throughout this second period of professional success Macklin paid daily visits to a secluded tavern, the Antelope, down White Hart Yard (now extended and known as Floral Street), for a pint of stout made hot and highly sweetened, which he believed eased his stomach and kept him free from internal pains.

One of the oldest taverns of any note round the delectable district we are surveying was the Shakespeare's Head. Situate at the corner of the Piazza and Russell Street, it had a beautifully painted projecting signboard, said to have cost £200. In an upper room of this resort for many years, until it could be accommodated at the Lyceum Theatre in the Strand, the Beefsteak Club, founded by George Lambert, the scene-painter of Covent Garden Theatre (some writers ascribe its origin to John

Rich, the manager and the first English harlequin, who performed under the name of Lunn), found a home. It is generally conceded that the inception of the club took place in the painting-room of the theatre while Lambert (or, as others say, Rich), too busy with pantomime preparations to frequent a tavern for the purpose, made an unceremonious meal on a beefsteak, and the novelty of the repast incited friends who looked in to bring a knife and fork (and a steak) with them and enjoy it with him. To trace the complete history of " The Sublime Society of Beefsteaks " would occupy far too much space. There had, however, been an earlier Beefsteak Club—the one founded by Richard Estcourt, the comedian of Drury Lane Theatre, at the George and Vulture Inn, off Cornhill in the City, towards the close of the eighteenth century. By way of countering the partisans of Rich as the originator of " The Sublime Society," it may be mentioned that a portrait done in oils of George Lambert adorned the club-room of the Shakespeare's Head. To this tavern, as to the Bedford Coffee House later, was transferred the celebrated Lion's Head, for the express benefit of Dr. John Hill, the editor of the *Inspector*, from Button's, the regular resort of Addison and Steele, with which we shall presently deal.

Next door to the Shakespeare's Head Tavern, just inside the Piazza, was the Bedford Coffee House, the successor in popularity, due to the death of Addison and the retirement of Steele after his paralytic attack into Carmarthenshire, of Button's. Here forgathered Henry Fielding, William Hogarth, R. B. Sheridan, and all the great actors from Garrick down to the Kembles, Young, Cooke, Liston, and Farren. At the Bedford, Garrick and Foote were at open rivalry, often indulging in verbal encounters until Garrick, abjectly defeated, could find no more to say. Profiting by the knowledge that the

Drury Lane magnate had started life in the wine business and supplied the Bedford Coffee House with wine, Foote on one occasion made capital out of the fact by loudly proclaiming him to have lived in Durham Yard of the Adelphi, and with only three quarts of vinegar in his cellar called himself a wine merchant. An upper room of the Bedford was the scene of the proposed duel between Sheridan and Captain Matthews, rivals for the hand of Miss Linley, the Beauty of Bath, whom Sheridan afterwards married. On the coffee-house keeper interposing the combatants went over to the Castle Tavern in Henrietta Street, where, after a little fencing, they were again parted.

Button's Coffee House, established in the year 1712 by Daniel Button, an old servant of the Countess Dowager of Warwick, stood on the south side of Russell Street, two or three doors from the end house of the newer Piazza, where a *hummum*, or Turkish sweating bath, the first in this country, came to be located. Hence the uncouth name, The Hummums, borne by the guest-house, specially favoured by country clergymen when on a visit to London, which succeeded it. At Button's, Addison and Steele were the exalted personages to whose conversation the literary loungers of the period lovingly lent their ears. Other men of letters frequently seen were Pope, Prior, Gay, Swift, Ambrose Phillips, Dr. Arbuthnot, and Richard Savage. A subscription raised at Button's in the year 1727 for the last-named, when he was in particularly penurious circumstances, realized seventy guineas.

Of Addison's married life at Holland House the saddest stories have been handed down to us. We are told by Dr. Johnson that "when Addison suffered any vexation from the Countess he withdrew the company from Button's house." This statement leads us to infer

that his manner at such times was uncongenial. After studying all the morning he greatly preferred to dine at a tavern before going to Button's. When Steele was editing the *Guardian*, to which Addison largely contributed, he made use every day of the Coffee House as an editorial office, and set up outside the famous "Lion's Head" for the reception of letters and literary effusions, all duly acknowledged in the next issue of the periodical. The idea of this ingenious piece of mechanism, described as "a proper emblem of knowledge and action, being all head and paws," his confrère avowedly derived from the lion's head of the Doges' Palace at Venice, into the gaping mouth of which public and private accusations were dropped by anonymous informers. The removal of the Lion's Head, first to the Shakespeare's Head Tavern and later to the Bedford Coffee House, has already been noted. In the year 1804 it was purchased by Charles Harrison, the lessee of the Grand Hotel, which was destined to become Evans's Supper Rooms, after whose death in 1827 it passed to his son, who disposed of it to the Duke of Bedford as a relic of "The Joyous Neighbourhood of Covent Garden" worthy of preservation at his country seat, Woburn Abbey. The year 1787 witnessed the conversion of Button's Coffee House into the private residence of Mrs. Inchbald, the authoress of *A Simple Story* and many successful plays.

Opposite Button's, that is to say, at No. 17, on the north side of Russell Street, was Tom's Coffee House, so called after its first proprietor, Thomas West, who in a fit of delirium threw himself from the second-floor window on November 26, 1722, and died instantly. Concerning his successors or the clientèle, no information has come down to us antecedent to the year 1764, when Thomas Haines formed a subscription club, with a card-room and the support of nearly seven hundred members,

each paying a guinea per year, drawn from the nobility, gentry, and *literati* of the day. Soon afterwards he took in the first floor of the next house westwards for a coffee-room. Thenceforward Tom's Coffee House became the focus of the conversational talent of Dr. Johnson, Garrick, Murphy, Dr. Dodd, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Goldsmith, Sir Philip Francis, Moody, George Colman the Elder, Smollett, Colley Cibber, and others as eminent in their professions as the men of wealth were distinguished in the upper ranks of Society. Though it had long ceased to be a club, the house maintained its prestige for good-fellowship until the year 1814.

No. 8, Russell Street was the bookshop of Tom Davis, where Boswell had his first meeting with Dr. Johnson. "At last," we are told in the famous biography, "on Monday, the 16th of May [1763], when I was sitting in Mr. Davis's back-parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davis, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop." At the very outset of his acquaintance with the man of letters, poor Boswell found himself subjected to a snubbing. Johnson was in a surly mood, having just been refused an order for the play by Garrick on behalf of Mrs. Williams. "Oh, sir!" said Bozzy, joining issue with the Davises over his annoyance, "I cannot think Mr. Garrick would refuse such a trifle to you." "Sir," was the stern rejoinder, "I have known David Garrick longer than you; and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject."

To the end of his existence Dr. Johnson cherished the liveliest affection for Covent Garden. On coming up to London from Lichfield he took a lodging in Exeter Street, and dined frugally at the Pine Apple in New Street on a cut of meat for sixpence, adding a penny for bread and a penny for the waiter. "So that I was quite well served," he said, "nay, better than the rest, for they gave

the waiter nothing." One incident of Johnson's middle age was being aroused from sleep at three o'clock in the morning by his lively companions Beauclerk and Langton for a little frolic. "What, is it you, you dogs?" he cried, poker in hand, at his chamber door in the Temple. "Then I'll have a frisk with you!" And so he dressed himself in haste, and accompanied them on a stroll through Covent Garden Market, utterly regardless of the language of the porters, whose progress, marching along, they impeded. Presently, when tired of the "frisk," the trio turned into a tavern and breakfasted on a bowl of bishop—a liquor composed of wine, oranges, and sugar.

Strange as it may appear to us in these days, the portico of St. Paul's Church "once upon a time" sheltered a notorious Covent Garden night-house known as Tom King's Coffee House. In Hogarth's print *Morning* this place, much like a wooden booth, is clearly shown with a demure lady on her way to early service, confronted by two town rakes embracing their light-o'-loves, and a drunken brawl with swords and cudgels in full swing outside. In front of the church, too, stood the Westminster Hustings, where political excitement always ran high on election days.

Stranger still it may seem to us that real flesh-and-blood performers could ever have feared the rivalry of puppet shows. During the Restoration period the regular actors became so alarmed at the popularity of an exhibition of this kind in Cecil Street that they petitioned the King for its removal because it interfered with the prosperity of Drury Lane Theatre. It is also on record that the sexton of St. Paul's Church laid a complaint before the parishioners of Covent Garden that a certain showman named Powell took advantage of the ringing of the church bell by commencing his performances in the

Piazza at the same time, so as to deceive the people who left their houses at the sound to visit his show instead of accepting it as a summons to the service. Nor was it only the Drama which sustained a loss of patronage through the competition of these wooden manikins, or marionettes as they would be styled to-day. From an account of a dispute between Powell, the puppet showman, and the managers of the Italian Opera of the year 1711, we learn that "the Opera at the Haymarket and that under the Piazza of Covent Garden are at present the two leading diversions of the Town; Powell professing in his advertisements to set up 'Whittington and His Cat' against 'Rinaldo and Armida.'" Considering that the operas of the time emanated from the master-mind of George Frederick Handel, audiences must have discovered rare excellences in the movements of Powell's puppets. It is not too much to say that the extraordinary vogue of these tiny performers, and the *mise-en-scène* employed for their presentment, were the direct incentive to the introduction of the first English pantomime by John Rich at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, viz. *Harlequin Executed*, on December 26, 1717.

This passing allusion to "Good Old Pantomime" leads us to speak of the originator of that unfailing fair-ground attraction of a bygone day, "The Richardson's Show." Born at Marlow, Bucks, in the year 1766, John Richardson found it hard to resist the fascination of the Drama, and while quite young attached himself to a company of strolling players. Eventually he entered upon the serious business of life as a freak showman. One of his most profitable hits was *The Spotted Boy*. With the money saved from this and other exhibitions he took over the Harlequin Tavern in Drury Lane, close to the theatre at the corner of Vinegar Yard, now obliterated. Here, cultivating the acquaintance of the fore-

most actors of the time, he soon yearned for " the smell of the lamps " and a return to the romantic profession left behind. A few years of successful tavern-keeping enabled him to have built and to equip a portable theatre after his own heart. Instead of the traditional " theatrical booth " entrance on a level with the ground, he provided a high, wide, and deep exterior platform upon which the *dramatis personæ* could disport themselves for the edification of the gaping crowd until, amid much shouting and gong-banging, a sufficiently large audience had mounted the steps and passed inside. With this novel adjunct, Richardson's Show, presenting the choicest examples of the Minor Drama, and always concluding with a harlequinade, became the outstanding feature of Bartholomew, Southwark, Greenwich, St. Albans, and other important fairs. When he died in the year 1836 its owner was found to have left £20,000 and a request in his will to be buried in the same grave as *The Spotted Boy*, the natural phenomenon which had set him on the high-road to Fortune.

If the question were asked why " Drury Lane Theatre," since it faces Catherine Street, is so obviously a misnomer, the answer would be that Killigrew's Theatre, opened under a patent of Charles II on April 8, 1663, with *The Humorous Lieutenant* as the *pièce de résistance*, and with Nell Gwynne in the cast, stood on the site of the Cockpit in Drury Lane, then a somewhat genteel neighbourhood. Burned down in 1672, it was succeeded by a much larger structure of Sir Christopher Wren's, and, like the original, often described as " The Cockpit Theatre," having its frontage in Drury Lane. David Garrick's thirty years' association with " Old Drury " brought about many stage reforms, notably the banishment of superior spectators from the sides of the stage—a survival of the Elizabethan playhouses—and

the introduction of footlights, as well as a westward extension of the fabric which absorbed a passage from Russell Street and Vinegar Yard, containing a disreputable night-house, the Rose Tavern. One of the rooms of the Rose figures in Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*, and here on November 14, 1712, was planned the duel between Lord Mohun and the Duke of Hamilton, resulting in the death of Mohun. Contemporary plays contain frequent allusions to the Rose Tavern and the evil company to be encountered there. Wren's theatre was entirely rebuilt in the year 1794, and then only did its façade abut upon an open space created by the demolition of a row of obstructive houses in Brydges Street, so called after William Brydges, Lord Chandos, the father-in-law of the Fourth Earl of Bedford. In the days of our youth the northern extension of Catherine Street, beyond White Hart and York Streets, still bore this designation. Again destroyed by fire in February 1809, " Old Drury " was replaced by the present capacious theatre, for the inaugural performance of which, on October 12, 1812, Lord Byron wrote a prologue. The portico and the colonnade were not added until 1821, shortly before lavish stage effects and structural alterations had reduced R. W. Elliston, the enterprising lessee, to a state of bankruptcy.

Perhaps it was fitting that a popular dramatist identified with " The Theatres twain of Covent Garden and of Drury Lane " should have been honoured with a public signboard. What is now the Opera Tavern facing the misnamed playhouse in the Brydges Street of former days, during the early part of the Victorian Era displayed the counterfeit presentment of Sheridan Knowles, the author of *Virginius*, *The Hunchback*, *The Love Chase*, etc., by way of a sign. In the parlour of this theatrical haunt was held " The Club of Owls," of which Augustine

Wade, a well-known writer and composer, was chairman, and Knowles himself, Pierce Egan, and Leman Rede were prominent members. A more suitable title for a coterie of *bon vivants* who turned night into day could scarcely have been chosen. When, however, with old age creeping upon him, the playwright retired from the active pursuit of his profession to become a Baptist preacher, the Club was dissolved, and the licensee of the Sheridan Knowles Tavern in sheer disgust at once took down the pictorial sign, substituting for it the one appertaining to the Lyric Drama now seen.

Had the life of the Rev. Stewart Headlam, the founder of the Church and Stage Guild, been spared a little while longer, he would have rejoiced to see the close connection between Religion and the Drama as it presents itself in Russell Street, Covent Garden. Playgoers who line up beneath the colonnade of "Old Drury" must be quite at a loss to explain the apparent "mix-up" of the National Scottish Church and the new Fortune Theatre with the figure of a nude girl on the mock-antique frontage across the way. Indeed, a superficial view leads the unsophisticated mind to confound these two distinct places of public assembly as one and the same edifice. Little enough did the elders of the first Scottish Church in London, established a short distance down Crown Court by the celebrated Dr. John Cumming, the exponent of the Apocalyptic interpretation (otherwise the Millennium) in the year 1832, foresee the possibilities of the present awkward juxtaposition when, shortly after the war, profiting by the wholesale clearance of house property on the north side of Russell Street, they secured a strip of land to make a direct approach thereto. The like confusion manifests itself in Crown Court, where the stage door of the new playhouse and the original entrance to the Church, still used, adjoin. By a strange com-

bination of circumstances the opening production of the Fortune Theatre at Christmas 1924 was a drama entitled *Sinners*, played twice daily.

Londoners who remember the time when it was customary to call for "a 'go' of gin," or rum, may be interested to learn how the expression originated. Dropping into the bar of the Queen's Head Tavern in the now obliterated Duke Court, Bow Street, rather late one evening, a couple of sporting characters, Annesley Shay and Bob Todrington, asked for a half-quartern of gin each, with a little cold water. Sipping and chatting quite leisurely soon necessitated a repeat order, which was followed by others. Towards midnight the publican, named Jupp, began to marvel at their holding capacity without betraying the least sign of intoxication. Still they tarried and kept on drinking into the small hours, until they had consumed twenty-four half-quarterns, each with a little more water. A facetious reminder of their achievement caused Shay to exclaim: "Well, now we'll go!" "Oh, no," replied his companion, "we'll have another, and then go!" Unwilling to be outdone in the matter of standing treat, Shay protested they must have another and then go; whereupon Todrington as stoutly maintained his right, in similar terms, to call for a parting glass. "Goodness gracious!" said the wondering Jupp to himself, "how many more goes before you quit?" Mature reflection on this nocturnal incident the next day suggested to him "a go" as the term for a quartern of gin or rum, served neat, with water *ad lib*. Until the new measure so designated came to be generally adopted, the dilution of spirits was always left to the publican by the customer's direction. Verily, in these days of "nips" and "doubles," passing the water-jug on the counter seems a cruel mockery.

What is now the Opera Hotel, on the east side of Bow

Street, was down to April 1881 the original Metropolitan Police Court. Identified with Henry Fielding, the novelist, and his brother, Sir John Fielding, as Chief Magistrates of the City of Westminster, the white-fronted building had for upwards of a century played its part in depriving celebrated criminals of their liberty. Of the Bow Street Runners everyone has heard. Armed with pistols, carrying handcuffs, and wearing red waistcoats, these primitive C.I.D. Men received their name, not because they were always on the run, but in allusion to scarlet-runners. Imaginative minds might possibly picture them seated in a row at headquarters, and on the receipt of a call to duty setting off *en masse* and tumbling over one another in their headlong course, like the Keystone Police of cinematograph fame. They were certainly both courageous and alert in tracking down criminals, also acting in concert with the Bow Street Patrol, often erroneously described as the King's Men, whose special mission was the capture of highway robbers. The introduction of the Metropolitan Police Force by Sir (then Mr.) Robert Peel—hence the nicknames "Bobbies" and "Peelers"—in the year 1829, soon followed by that of the Criminal Investigation Department at Great Scotland Yard, left no further use for the Bow Street Runners. Before passing on it behoves us to state that throughout his magisterial career at Bow Street, between the years 1748 and 1754, Henry Fielding occupied a house somewhere on the site of the new Police Court, and here he wrote *Tom Jones* (1749) and *Amelia* (1751), *Joseph Andrews* having been given to the world in the year 1742.

Will's Coffee House, still standing at the corner of Bow and Russell Streets, should be a particular object of veneration to the student of English Literature. On the first floor for thirty years, until death overtook him at

the dawn of the eighteenth century, John Dryden was the idol of peers and players and all sorts and conditions of cultured men lending eager ears to his judgment on contemporary books and plays. In his *Diary* Pepys makes frequent allusions to " The Great Coffee House " where he first tasted the new drink called " Tay." References by Addison and Steele to Will's as " The Wits' Coffee House " were in perfect keeping with the gossiping diarist's appreciation of its company and " very witty and pleasant discourse." To-day how different the aspect in its commercial character of a market-produce warehouse to that of the Augustan Age of Literature, when the ground-floor was a print-seller's shop and every room overhead harboured clubbable men!

Evans's Supper Rooms, the Albion Tavern, and the Cyder Cellars, likewise the Coal Hole in the Strand, have already been exhaustively dealt with in our precedent work, *London Inns and Taverns*. Then what remains ? Only Rule's in Maiden Lane. This surely merits, and shall now receive, a chapter to itself. Meanwhile it is fitting to mention that, as a sad commentary on the democratic trend of " The Joyous Neighbourhood," the centuries-old domain of the Dukes of Bedford, having passed into plebeian hands, to-day bears the proprietory description of " The Beecham Estates and Pills, Limited."

# VIII

# A TAVERN TREASURE HOUSE

# VIII

## A TAVERN TREASURE HOUSE

A plea for a theatrical portrait gallery—A hint from the faithful likenesses of old Gaiety favourites at the new theatre—An exhaustive collection at Rule's, in Maiden Lane, Strand—Multitudinous exhibits not confined to portraiture—A professional resort *par excellence*—Celebrated habitués—Pride of survival as the last of the London supper taverns.

SOME time ago there appeared in the leading organ of the dramatic profession a lengthy letter advocating the establishment of a theatrical portrait gallery. The writer, who concealed his (or her) identity under the initials "D. S. M.," laid stress on the sorry lack of notable artistic memorials of modern histrionic triumphs, and citing the Sargent portrait of Miss (now Dame) Ellen Terry at the Tate Gallery as the outstanding example, made a powerful appeal for the encouragement of such work among painters in oils. There can be no question that thousands of enthusiastic playgoers would cherish a collection of enduring remembrances of actors and actresses in their most successful rôles depicted on canvas. At present the only mementoes of famous creations identified with long runs are our anniversary souvenirs, which, however well executed they may be, fall infinitely short of the handiwork of a skilled painter. Now that the Drama holds such a high place among the Arts, time is surely ripe for systematic additions to the very few Thespian subjects at the National Portrait Gallery—Garrick, Kean, Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons almost exhaust the list. The fact that the Sargent portrait of Dame Ellen Terry is housed elsewhere explains the conservatism of the institution hard

by Trafalgar Square in restricting its wall space to the counterfeit presentments of histrions enshrined in public memory by tradition alone.

After all, men and women become really great in the world's eyes only after they have been laid to rest. Nevertheless there is not the slightest reason why we should deny artistic commemoration to all stage favourites, both present and bygone, whose life-work will one day be summed up by the historian of the Drama. Take, for example, the miniature portrait gallery of Nellie Farren, Kate Vaughan, Connie Gilchrist, Letty Lind, Ellaline Terriss, and Phyllis Dare in the new Gaiety Theatre dress-circle *foyer*. This idea might be improved upon *ad infinitum* for the benefit of the whole playgoing community. A permanent public exhibition of the kind, comprehensive in scope, whether as a section of some existing Art Gallery or set up in a separate centrally situated edifice, would have a very "live" interest for Londoners and be largely frequented. Moreover, its inclusion in the guide-books might prove a strong stimulus to visitation by American and Colonial sightseers. This at least was the fond hope of the polite letter-writer referred to.

Everyone may not know that the nucleus—and a great deal more—of such a collection has already found a home in the Strand district. That "D. S. M." made no mention of it seemed surprising. Unwittingly or otherwise he ignored the inner attractions of Rule's historic oyster-house in Maiden Lane, which embrace what is at once a theatrical portrait gallery and museum. Perhaps, like scores of actors who meet or just drop in at the bar, he (assuming him to be aware of its existence) has never betrayed a curiosity to see what is in the restful snuggery beyond or on the two floors overhead. Whole hours might in fact be spent over surveying the treasures

which adorn the walls, staircases, and each nook and corner. Nor do they end here. Stored away in attics and cellars are many more that cannot possibly be displayed. Rule's has since time out of mind been quite as much a resort for intellectual fare as for joyous feeding and true *camaraderie*. A professional " house of call " *par excellence*, it knows not the mental depression caused by the wailings of sorrowers and borrowers. On the contrary, the spirit of content reigns over the place, while the most distinguished votaries of Literature, Art, and the Drama may often be found swelling the numbers of habitués who discuss a set meal in the *salons*.

The first object to arrest attention in the recherché smoking-lounge belowstairs will certainly be the beautifully clear-cut marble bust of Charles Mathews. Nearby is a smaller example of the plastic art, in bronze, of Dan Leno, whose alluring smile bespeaks the soul of Comedy. Alas ! we may never look upon his like again. Of *objets de vertu* mention need only be made of the magnificent piece of statuary, " Hyperides and Phryne," by Valko of Florence, beneath an illuminated glass shade in a cosy-corner niche. Let us come at once to the pictures. A Van de Vere " Othello " is a subject to be lingered lovingly over. Whether it be the original study complete to the last detail or a replica of Sir Thomas Lawrence's famous picture of John Philip Kemble as Hamlet in the National Portrait Gallery, that which occupies pride of position in the inner lounge excites the admiration of all beholders. Scarcely less interesting is the exemplification close at hand of the art work of a great actor, Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, as represented by a portrait of Mrs. Kendal. Further paintings in oils comprise Mme. Vestris, Mrs. Siddons (two), Edwin Forrest, Fred Emery, and Mr. Raymond as Macbeth.

Other mural embellishments of theatrical portraits, framed playbills, autograph letters, tickets for gala performances, views of theatre interiors, and copies (or originals) of old leases utterly defy enumeration. The heterogeneous character of the collection actually enhances its charm. In brief, almost every actor and actress of renown from the days of Garrick down to our own figures in Rule's portrait gallery. Some gaps remain to be filled, it is true—not on the walls, but chronologically. Mrs. Stirling and Hermann Vezin are "among the missing." Conversely, all the Drury Lane, Haymarket, and Adelphi favourites are here. William Henry Betty ("The Infant Roscius"), G. V. Brooke, T. P. Cooke, Henderson, Liston, Farren, Toole, and Fred Wright enter into the goodly company. As the author of an ill-fated tragedy, *Irene*, and the friend of David Garrick, the lineaments of Dr. Samuel Johnson, too, may be studied. Monsieur Julien, of *bal masque* fame, and nearer our own time Monsieur Rivière, were habitués of Rule's—so they left their portraits. Of operatic stars and dancers oldsters can recall pleasant memories by looking round. There is a quaint hand-painting of Charles Dickens as an actor in the character of Captain Bobadil. A large portrait of Wilson Barrett as Claudian hangs side by side with those of performers unknown to the present generation of playgoers. A tracing of Shakespeare's signature to his will and that of his executors, and views of the last resting-places of Charles Dickens and Sir Henry Irving in Westminster Abbey, are welcome variants amid the galaxy of histrionic portraiture.

In its collection of old play-bills Rule's is especially rich. These relate to every London theatre from the forties of the bygone century. One, dated May 29, 1856, establishes the first appearance, at eight years of

age, of Miss Ellen Terry as Mamillius in *The Winter's Tale* at the Princess's Theatre. The very last day-bill associated with the honoured career of Sir Henry Irving is surely destined to increase in value as the years roll on. But what shall we say to a bill of 1851 attesting the appearance of Charles Dickens, John Forster, Wilkie Collins, Mark Lemon, John Tenniel, Peter Cunningham, and other celebrities away from the stage as actors *pro tem.* in Bulwer Lytton's *Not So Bad As We Seem!* specially written and played for a charity at the Hanover Square Rooms, when all the scenery was painted by Royal Academicians? Treasures such as these are not to be lightly prized. On the other exhibits at Rule's it were vain to descant, save in general terms. They include Alf. Bryan's *Moonshine* theatrical cartoons; the whole first series of *Vanity Fair* cartoons by "Ape"; an infinite number of Rowlandson's drawings, and Dighton's coloured sketches of London personalities and street characters (1794 to 1812); views of Old London, sporting pictures, paintings by Constable and George Morland, together with curios of every conceivable kind remote from all connection with a theatrical picture gallery and museum.

That such a treasure house could have existed for so many years within a minute's walk of the Strand is a reflection little short of amazing. Outside the dramatic, variety and legal professions to-day Rule's can scarcely boast of being known at all; neither are Americans "doing London" directed thereto, for the simple reason that topographers and compilers of the guide-books seemingly remain in blissful ignorance of its multitudinous attractions. Established next door to the birthplace of J. M. W. Turner, the great landscape-painter, Rule's has been a famous rendezvous ever since the year 1798. Concerning the original Rule local

history or tradition yields us no information, save that his oyster-house soon developed into a supper tavern of a perfectly distinctive character; for whereas Evans's Supper Rooms, the Coal Hole, the Cyder Cellars, and similar nocturnal resorts were essentially "Caves of Harmony," Rule's was the one place where conversation found its safety-valve after the theatre well into the small hours of the morning. Here actor, dramatist, journalist, novelist, painter, and lawyer met on a common footing, and the talk was that of men attached to the Arts and the learned professions. As to the suppers, they consisted of oysters, grilled bones, devilled kidneys, and Welsh-rarebits, washed down with excellent brown stout—all which consumed much time, while the conversation never flagged.

To the founder of Rule's there succeeded his two sons; and then came William Harding Bayliss, a host of many years' popularity who, prompted by the gift of sundry mementoes of Albert Smith's single-handed entertainment *The Ascent of Mont Blanc* at the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, including a willow-pattern plate adorned with the entertainer's portrait, and a witty invitation to "The Show" (perhaps the earliest professional use of the term), dated November 28, 1855, at once devoted himself to making Rule's a depository of Art. Equally zealous for the acquisition of pictorial and cognate exhibits such as we now view were succeeding licensees, until the late Captain O'Brien and his charming wife, Miss Carrie Julian, of stage renown, gave themselves up whole-heartedly to the realization of London's only fully licensed treasure house.

The mere citation of celebrities who made Rule's their rendezvous would fill a newspaper column. Let it, therefore, suffice to name at random Mark Lemon, Douglas Jerrold, W. M. Thackeray, Albert Smith, Charles

Dickens, Wilkie Collins, John Leech, George Augustus Sala, Edmund Yates, George R. Sims, Clement Scott, William Terriss, Henry Irving, J. L. Toole, Squire Bancroft, Walter Besant, Sir Edward Clarke, Lord Chancellor Cairns, and F. C. Burnand. During the war, when Harry Davis held the reins of management, Rule's passed through very trying times ; but happily, due to the partial relaxation of licensing restrictions and the engaging personality of Mr. T. D. Bell, who hailed from the Clarendon Restaurant on Hammersmith Broadway and the Alhambra, Paris, Rule's has recovered its former prosperity, and may be said to rank as the premier professional haunt of Central London. At all hours, when the " house " is permitted to cater for custom, the outer bar declares itself to be the meeting-place of actors and variety artistes, each in a merry, talkative mood, and as eager to tell a good story as to lend ear to one, while the luncheon and supper tables rarely betray a vacant seat. Hence, as the very last of the supper taverns in succession to the Old London Coffee Houses, and the progenitor of the professional club-houses of the West End, Rule's makes a distinct claim to the respectful notice of the student of English sociology.

# IX

# LONG ACRE AND "THE DIALS"

# IX

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"The Seven Acres"—John Taylor, the Water Poet—The Poet's Head Tavern—The Globe—The King's Arms—Notable residents in Long Acre—Coachbuilders and harness-makers—An artistic tavern sign—Miniature busts of a beloved Queen—The Kemble's Head Tavern—Mastication, vocalization, bed and breakfast at the Garrick's Head Hotel—"Baron" Nicholson and "Judge and Jury Entertainments"—The Wrekin in Broad Court—A public clock calendar—The St. Martin's Music Hall—The Queen's Theatre—The Cross Keys Tavern, Endell Street—Trust Houses, Ltd.—Seven Dials—Bird shops and the Catnach Press—John Evelyn and "The Seven Streets"—The Huguenot Invasion—Low-life associations—"The Dials" a *terra incognita* for timorous men—"The Forty Thieves"—Horse omnibuses an improving factor—The Crown Tavern and the Shakespeare Hotel.

THE application of the term "Long Acre" to the great coachbuilders' thoroughfare skirting the north side of Covent Garden will be better understood when we reflect that it formed part of "The Seven Acres" filched from the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields through the building of St. Paul's Church by Inigo Jones and the resultant creation of a separate parish at the instance of the ground landlord, as stated in the penultimate chapter. Previously known as The Elms, on account of the trees on either hand, Long Acre received its present name after the laying out of Great Queen Street—so called in honour of the well-beloved queen of Charles I—from Lincoln's Inn Fields to Drury Lane, then a fashionable neighbourhood. The speedy erection of fine houses by Inigo Jones and his pupil, Walter Webbe, in the new street, led to the setting up of more or less humble taverns in Long Acre for the refreshment of wayfarers to Leicester Fields, the open hunting ground of Soho and "The Road to Reading."

One of these, situate in Phœnix Alley (now Hanover Court), displaying the sign of the Crown, was kept by John Taylor, the Water Poet, who to express his grief at the martyrdom of Charles I changed it to the Mourning Crown. As might have been foreseen, such a public exhibition of party feeling caused the Commonwealth Parliament to order its suppression. Thereupon he substituted his own portrait for a sign of the Poet's Head, with this couplet, " There's many a head stands for a sign, Then, gentle reader, why not mine? " Styling himself *Poeta Aquaticus* on the title-pages of upwards of sixty books of original verse, Taylor had spent the greater part of his life as a Thames waterman, and also, in connection therewith, official collector of certain fees payable to the Constable of the Tower on all wines imported into London. In the year 1618 he walked from London to Edinburgh and back, the account of his journey being afterwards published under the title of *The Pennyless Pilgrimage*. He died at the Poet's Head Tavern in November 1654. At the near-by Globe, kept by Bessie Cox, a woman of questionable respectability, Matthew Prior secluded himself for days and nights together with the " Beautiful Chloe " so often addressed in his poems. The King's Arms, still standing, was the birthplace of Thomas Stothard, the artist, in 1755.

The coachbuilders began to settle in Long Acre soon after the accession of William III, and as a matter of course the harness-makers followed suit. Needless to add, perhaps, in these hustling days, the motor-car industry has almost wholly supplanted that of horse-drawn vehicles. If anything more than a superficial observation of this fact were needed it would be found in the knowledge that August 18, 1926, witnessed the very last horse sale at Aldridge's famous repository in

St. Martin's Lane. In Long Acre Samuel Pepys made the acquaintance of his wife, the charming lady whom he by turns caressed and neglected. Among other notable residents were Oliver (then a plain Captain) Cromwell, between the years 1637 and 1643, in a house on the Covent Garden side ; Nicholas Stone, the sculptor of the fine monument of Sir Francis Vere in Westminster Abbey and the lions on the York Water Gate at the foot of Villiers Street, Strand, a few doors west of the Bird-in-Hand Tavern, distinguished for its artistic wrought-iron sign ; and, most worthy of all to mention, John Dryden, from 1682 to 1686, on the site of the Dryden Press at No. 137 on the north side. Traversing Long Acre to-day one would little divine that it can boast of historic associations.

Yet, after all, who that is not an antiquary by instinct ever thinks of inquiring into the significance of things seen as he walks or rides abroad ? Take, for instance, the diminutive stone busts which adorned every one of the old houses in the eastern portion of Long Acre, between Bow Street and Drury Lane, as half a dozen such still do in Wilson Street, which runs parallel with it. These concrete evidences of the affection borne by the English people for Queen Henrietta Maria were much more eloquent than the mere naming of the adjacent Great Queen Street in her honour. Although a goodly number of the last remaining examples have within the last year or two been taken away by the house-breakers employed upon the temporary premises of the Odhams Press, Ltd., very few Londoners ever noticed them, and we question whether the local tradesmen whose original brick frontages they graced could say offhand whom they represented.

The Kemble's Head Tavern has been a familiar landmark at he corner of Long Acre and Bow Street ever

since John Philip Kemble, the greatest tragedian of modern times, created a furore with his magnificent impersonation of the character of Hamlet at Drury Lane Theatre in the year 1783. Supplementing the lettered sign, a large bust of him appears on the house-top. At the opposite corner, on the spot long occupied by Messrs. Merryweather & Son's fire-engine and fire-fighting appliance showrooms, stood the Garrick's Head Hotel, where from the year 1840 onwards visitors to London had a good time after the theatre over supper, followed by vocalization, bed and breakfast—all for half a crown. Could catering enterprise go farther? Here, too, "Baron" Renton Nicholson exploited his clever but disgusting "Judge and Jury Entertainment" on Sunday evenings, prior to giving three daily shows at the Coal Hole in the Strand during the Great Exhibition of 1851, and later at the Cyder Cellars in Maiden Lane.

An essentially theatrical rendezvous throughout the palmy days of the Drama was the Wrekin, established by William Powell, a Shropshire man, down Broad Court, adjoining the present Sun Tavern, No. 66, Long Acre. Topographical signboards being somewhat rare, it should be explained that this one reflected the name of a high hill in the vicinity of the host's birthplace. Frequented by the chief actors of the neighbouring playhouses, the Wrekin naturally attracted their admirers who loved to find themselves in jovial company. The next host, a Herefordshire sportsman named Harrold, made himself particularly well liked. In order to ensure the selectness of the parlour he served only the best wines there, while his provision of hot suppers proved very acceptable to professional patrons after a strenuous night's performance. The excellent character borne by the Wrekin was maintained for upwards of half a century until its last popular host, Alfred Hemming, an Adelphi Theatre

actor, went to establish the Café de l'Europe in the Haymarket, whereupon the Albion Tavern in Russell Street came into the ascendant as a players' resort. The subsequent building of great blocks of flats in Broad Court has obliterated even the memory of the Wrekin and its light-hearted frequenters.

The merging of the old Freemasons' Tavern, at No. 56, Great Queen Street, where Boswell resided from 1786 to 1789, into the Connaught Rooms, has been all for the good in a catering sense of the Freemasons' Arms in Long Acre, opposite the erstwhile *Gentlewoman* printing offices and the public clock which showed the day of the week and month.

A stone tablet set into the rear wall of the Odhams Press, Ltd., in Arne Street—so called after Dr. Arne, the composer of our national anthem, *Rule Britannia*, and the brother of the celebrated Mrs. Cibber—attests the commencement of building operations upon St. Martin's Music Hall on June 21, 1847. Opened by Dr. John Hullah for oratorios and high-class concerts, this became the accepted *locale* for what nowadays bear the description of vocal and instrumental "recitals," also lectures and public meetings. Here, in April 1858, Charles Dickens gave the first of his exceedingly popular readings. Promenade concerts, too, made their earliest bid for patronage at St. Martin's Music Hall. After undergoing extensive structural alterations, without, however, interfering with the Endell Street frontage, it was opened as the Queen's Theatre by Alfred Wigan, previously lessee of the Tottenham Street Theatre, on October 24, 1867. On its boards the late Sir Henry Irving played a succession of "heavy" parts with Miss Ellen Terry in the same cast, until he appeared as Chevenix in Henry J. Byron's *Uncle Dick's Darling* at the Gaiety, which performance paved the way for a sterling proof of his quality

as Digby Grant in James Albery's *The Two Roses* at the Vaudeville. Soon afterwards, viz. in 1869, the beautiful Mrs. Rousby made her debut at the Queen's Theatre in the character of Fiordelisa in *The Fool's Revenge*. Old playgoers must cherish recollections of her triumphs in *'Twixt Axe and Crown* and *Joan of Arc*. In our time the great building has witnessed many changes ere, together with the coachmakers' frontage and Carter's seed warehouse, it became Messrs. Odhams' printing-works. The royal arms on the summit, facing Bow Street, generally pass unnoticed. Internally the entrance-hall of the theatre now serves as the publishing office, the vestibule accommodates stacks of paper, and the grand staircase affords access to the readers' department in the old refreshment saloon. The sad story of the dropping of a Zeppelin bomb through the centre of the fabric during the war, whereby scores of poor persons who had sought refuge in the basement lost their lives, will not soon fade from public memory.

That singularly unprogressive thoroughfare Endell Street contains an interesting tavern, the Cross Keys, with a fine carved-oak sign of two cupids supporting large crossed keys. In Short's Gardens close by are the registered offices of Trust Houses, Ltd., a truly go-ahead company, which controls more than a hundred country inns—some historic, others picturesque, and all of them figuring on the Automobile Association's "recommended" list. Everywhere their trade-mark, a white horse rampant on a black-star field, stands for a trustworthy intimation of superior accommodation, moderate terms, and efficient service.

Short's Gardens lead direct to Seven Dials. Could anyone in his wildest dreams ever have imagined the uprise of a modern guest-house like the Shaftesbury Hotel amid such surroundings? This commodious

corner structure, which extends a considerable distance along two of the radiating streets from the open space colloquially termed "The Dials," may be said to have put the finishing touch to the betterment of a once utterly undelectable district. Its inauguration takes us back only eleven years, and we rejoice to learn it has realized the most sanguine expectations. Moreover, the neighbouring Crown Tavern, traditionally known as "The Clock House," has since developed marvellously improved tendencies. Although, with the exceptions of the Shaftesbury Hotel and the rear annexe of the French Hospital in Shaftesbury Avenue, no part of Great or Little St. Andrew Streets presents a new building, Time's changes have brought about a marked respectability of the whole area round about. In mid-Victorian days low-life associations clung persistently to "The Dials," chiefly by reason of their vivid pen-portrayal in the *London Journal* stories of J. F. Smith and the ragamuffin dramas of Andrew Halliday. Vanished, save one, still styled "The Royal Menageries," at the corner of Neale Street, have the numerous bird and animal shops which were formerly a characteristic feature of the locality, and with them the small printer's whose signboard "Fortey, late Catnach," conjured up recollections of a quite famous publisher of song-words, sold by the yard like a packet of pins, rudely illustrated nursery rhymes and alleged "dying confessions" of gallows victims. Publicly "cried" in the streets, as at fairs, markets, and race-meetings, these catchpenny examples of the typographic art are no more likely to be resuscitated than the ancient chap-books.

Seven Dials was not the original designation of the new town which arose in the Cock and Pie Fields, surrounding a ramshackle alehouse, the Cock and Pie (a corruption of Peacock and Pie), the known resort of idle

and dissolute characters. Its builder had in mind an aggregation of houses for genteel residents, and to this end he replaced the insignificant boundary stone of St. Martin and St. Giles parishes with a Doric pillar to be seen way down converging avenues that at once gave the name of "The Seven Streets" to the new estate. Thus we read in Evelyn's *Diary*, under date October 5, 1694 : "I went to see the building beginning near St. Gyles's where seven streets make a star from a Doric pillar placed in the middle of a circular area, said to be built by Mr. Neale." When all the houses were ready for occupation the builder crowned his work by affixing to the top of the pillar seven sundials. That these could not have been clock faces according to the popular misconception of the word "dial" is proved by the couplet from Gay's often-quoted "Trivia" (1716): "Here to seven streets seven dials count the day, and from each other catch the circling ray."

Instead of being favoured by superior folk "The Seven Streets" remained tenantless until the overcrowding of already congested districts contiguous to the City by Protestant refugees after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes prompted the lower classes to seek a settlement wheresoever the opening up of a fresh building estate promised them house-room ; and in this way the New Town soon degenerated into a region of squalor and poverty.

The Seven Dials pillar was removed in the year 1773 through an erroneous impression that a large sum of money and other treasure lay buried beneath it. Though delving brought nothing whatever to light, its restoration did not appear to be specially called for. The pillar itself may be seen to-day on Weybridge Green, forming a monument to the Duchess of York who died in 1820. After having served as a mounting-block at the local

Ship Inn for some time the Dials also were transferred to one side of the Green. A praiseworthy effort to make the "Seven Dials" of St. Giles's parish something more than a mere name resulted in the setting up of a clock near the roof of the north-east corner house consecrated to the sale of malt liquor, in the hope of the other radiating streets becoming similarly adorned, but they systematically failed to follow the example. Of this piece of mechanism the hollow dial alone remains.

Improving tendencies began to assert themselves when horse buses made a short cut through "The Dials" from Trafalgar Square to Oxford Street. Until then this was a *terra incognita* to all self-respecting persons fearful of venturing into the acknowledged thieves' quarter. Doubly police-patrolled even by day, it bore a positively murderous reputation by night. More than half the robberies with violence that took place in London were traceable to unwitting visitations of this dangerous area.

It can be no disparagement to the present successors of a typical pot-house keeper with a bad record if we here quote the testimony of an eye-witness to the sordid night-life of the Crown Tavern and its vicinity: "'The Forty Thieves,'" writes "One of the Old Brigade" in his *London in the Sixties*, a racy narrative of the escapades of the officers of a crack regiment stationed at the Tower, "were an organized body of sirens whose headquarters were the Seven Dials, and whose mission it was to entice, decoy, and cajole any fool who had the temerity to listen to their cooing. The Clock House on the Dials, now an apparently well-conducted tavern, was in those days a hotbed of villainy. The King of Pickpockets there held his nightly levee, and the half-dozen constables within view would no more have thought of entering it than they would the cage of a cobra. If a man lost a dog the

reward was offered there ; if one's watch disappeared it was there immediate application was desirable ; and if the emissary was not ' saucy,' he might with luck save it from the melting-pot that simmered all day and all night within fifty feet of Aldridge's horse repository. The walk through the Dials after dusk was an act none but a lunatic would have attempted, and the betting that he ever emerged with his shirt was 1,000 to 60."

Happily such evil things are now but a memory, else the Shaftesbury Hotel would never have reared its head proudly against the sky, or the Crown Tavern (the old Clock House) opposite, been made to compare with any other superior resort for the rest and refreshment of law-abiding citizens.

# X

# THE NEW THEATRELAND

# X

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The parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields—Woe-begone surroundings of the church in Bloomsbury village—New Compton Street—"Scene Painters' Alley," Denmark Street—"The Resurrection Gate"—The Malefactors' Last Drink at the "Half-Way House" to Tyburn—Boot "translators" in Monmouth Street—Cambridge Circus—Pretty little theatres in West Street—Freak photographs at the Marquis of Granby—The originator of the twice-nightly variety show—Old Slaughter's Coffee House, St. Martin's Lane—The Green Man and French Horn—The Strand no longer an actors' promenade—The London Coliseum—The London Hippodrome—The Palace Theatre—Playhouses in the New Theatreland.

THE most superficial observer who has spent the greater part of his life in London must endorse the statement that, despite the steady north-westward trend of Theatreland, due to the construction of Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue, and the up-to-dateness of every one of its taverns, the centrally situated parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields remains in much the same state as it was in Hogarth's day. Between New Oxford Street and Long Acre, north to south, and between High Holborn and Cambridge Circus, east to west, the hand of the builder has been but sparingly at work since the memory of man. With the exception of the corner block formed by the Princes Theatre and adjacent shop property opposite the triangular open space overlooked by the rear façade of the Crown Tavern, at the nominal commencement of Shaftesbury Avenue, the aspect of Broad Street, Bloomsbury, stills conveys the impression of a village centre flanked by its church and God's Acre.

Around this a singularly prosaic district, even now

devoid of omnibus traffic, long years ago sprang up. The only plausible suggestion for the building of such an aggregation of tall houses in the narrow, winding New Compton Street may be found in the historic fact that "The Rookery of St. Giles," cut through for the formation of New Oxford Street in the year 1847, proved wholly inadequate for the housing of the Irish element originally crowded out of "The Seven Streets," otherwise "The Dials." A more depressing thoroughfare it is not easy to imagine. And the like characteristics manifest themselves in the divergent portion of High Holborn, Endell, Great St. Andrew, Denmark, and High Streets. Nor is this all. Walking along Shaftesbury Avenue one discerns on the north side the same old shops formerly tenanted by second-hand-clothes dealers and boot "translators," of which Dickens has left us an interesting "Boz" sketch entitled *Meditations in Monmouth Street*. Hemmed in by New Compton Street and Little Denmark Street, the latter more aptly described as "Scene Painters' Alley"—the Church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields utterly belies its name. Who now thinks of inspecting that once-popular object of admiration, the Lich-gate with its peculiar specimen of bronze sculpture representing the Last Judgment which was brought from Florence and placed on the gate of the old church in the year 1686? In the days of our sires country-folk numbered "The Resurrection Gate of St. Giles's" among the curiosities of London.

The circumstances giving rise to the diversion of wheeled traffic westwards from High Holborn proper into the heart of Bloomsbury Village, and thence up the High Street to the Oxford Road, have already been pointed out. Long before "The Rookery of St. Giles" intercepted a direct line of communication, however, small groups of habitations on its site had the effect of

investing the vicinity of the parish church with all the importance of a public highway containing what was perhaps the most noted "house of call" in London. Displaced by the present tavern, the Angel, adjoining the churchyard in the year 1873, this had from time immemorial been known as The Bowl. The recognized "Half-way House" between Newgate and Tyburn Toll Gate, it was the invariable halting-place for wayfarers seeking refreshment, and throughout that protracted period when public hangings at Tyburn, St. Giles's Pound, or outside the Mother Red Cap in Camden Town disgraced our civilization, a great increase of business at times flowed to the old alehouse in Bloomsbury Village. On such occasions, with one accord the howling mob that followed "the fatal cart" not only stopped to quench their thirst, but took care meanwhile to bar the progress of the vehicle. As a conciliatory measure they treated the driver to drinks. The Newgate chaplain and the hangman were likewise regaled. This actuated some early tavern-keeper of "The Half-way House" to send the unhappy criminal seated on his coffin a bowl of ale. Executions being frequent in those days, a mere act of kindness came in process of time to be regarded as a prescriptive right. Hence successive tavern-keepers always provided a bowl of ale for the malefactor on his last dismal journey while the driver drew up voluntarily, and the "house" itself displayed the sign of The Bowl. These anything but festive gatherings continued down to the year 1783, when the place of execution was transferred to the front of Newgate Gaol in the Old Bailey. The demolition of The Bowl to make way for the present fully licensed tavern with a fresh sign has by now caused the historic associations of the spot to pass out of public ken.

At Cambridge Circus the scene suddenly changes.

Here we are on the verge of the New Theatreland. Little Earl Street, leading down to the Shaftesbury Hotel and "The Dials," harbours both shops and busy market stalls. In West Street, a short cross communication with Upper St. Martin's Lane, will be found the pretty little Ambassadors' Theatre, and next to it the equally seductive St. Martin's Theatre. At the juncture of these two turnings the Marquis of Granby, now an exceedingly well-appointed tavern-restaurant, stands out conspicuously. Known far and wide as "Belmont's," and featuring, in addition to the usual mural embellishments of a professional rendezvous, a somewhat gruesome collection of freak photographs, its former host was George E. Belmont, whose sobriquet "Barnum's Beauty" had been conferred upon him by the *Referee* after winning the first prize at an International Male Beauty Show. In the matter of framing alliterative advertisements the genial George stood unrivalled. Hailing from the United States, his first appearance on the stage in this country was as one of "The Brothers Belmont, comic duettists and double-clog dancers" at the Edinburgh Theatre of Varieties in December 1879. A short chat with him at the bar of the Marquis of Granby in after-years would at once have dispelled the popular notion that the Moss and Stoll "Empires" were the pioneers of the twice-nightly variety show.

On August 3, 1885, Mr. Belmont opened the old Sebright Music Hall in Gloucester Street, Hackney Road, giving two performances each evening exactly alike. Before he came to it this ramshackle Hall of Song had degenerated into a "free-and-easy," with the gas cut off and paraffin lamps as the only illuminant. The utmost success attended his enterprise at the Sebright Palace. The prices were twopence, fourpence, and sixpence, smoking was allowed in all parts of the auditorium,

and ladies, if accompanied by a gentleman, were admitted free on Thursdays. The Two Macs topped the bill during the first week. On the night of February 3, 1886, Miss Marie Lloyd, then not quite sixteen and a native of the district, besought him to give her a trial turn. Agreeing to the request, he found the debutante to be so talented that a salaried engagement commencing with the ensuing week was at once drawn up. In the course of the next ten years every Music Hall favourite appeared at the Sebright. Mr. Belmont thus claimed and enjoyed the monopoly of the "split show."

Before passing on it should be mentioned that Harwood's Varieties, in Pitfield Street, Hoxton, which had long given a two-houses-a-night entertainment, was really a theatre under a licence of the Lord Chamberlain, song and dance "turns" being merely incidental to the statutory presentation of a stage play. Prompted by the enduring prosperity of the Sebright Palace, Mr. C. H. Macdermott, the "Lion Comique," then lessee of the Foresters' Music Hall in Cambridge Heath Road, followed the example of "Barnum's Beauty." On September 22, 1894, Mr. Belmont inaugurated the twice-nightly show at the Olympic Theatre, after having run Sadler's Wells Theatre on the same lines from November 18th of the previous year. Although cheap-priced varieties did not meet with marked approbation in the Strand district, they attracted large audiences to the Clerkenwell playhouse for eight and a half years. Yet another of Mr. Belmont's ventures was the Surrey Theatre from September 2, 1901, onwards. At these legitimate houses, however, the performance of a short dramatic item was obligatory, while smoking could only be indulged in the refreshment saloons.

Back again in person at the Sebright Palace, where varieties filled out the programme, Mr. Belmont enjoyed

a further two years of unmitigated success. On August 3, 1903, Mr. Barasford, at the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton, and Mr. Oswald Stoll, at the new Hackney Empire, lowered their gallery prices to twopence. This had a most disastrous effect upon the fortunes of the original twice-nightly variety house. After holding on until January 1904 "Barnum's Beauty" disposed of the property and became a licensed victualler. The removal, about the same time, of the variety agents from the neighbourhood of the York Hotel, somewhat unkindly styled "Poverty Corner," in the Waterloo Road, into the Strand district, opened up a fine field of business at the Marquis of Granby, which its host proclaimed to be "a house of call for artistes of all colours and from all climes." Where the coloured comedians and the fat negresses who smoked cigarettes and made light of life's cares now find a welcome the denizens of a circumscribed area in the foreign quarter north of Oxford Street might explain. If in the foregoing we have dwelt at undue length upon a single theme, it is because the inception of the twice-nightly show should prove illuminating to the future historian of London amusements.

Three doors from the north-western extremity of St. Martin's Lane was Old Slaughter's Coffee House. First heard of in the year 1742, this became the resort of many famous artists, including Gainsborough, Wilkie, Haydon, and Roubillac the sculptor; as well as Frenchmen, and especially army officers until the establishment of the United Service Club after the Napoleonic Wars. The Green Man and French Horn across the way, which, thanks to the excellent foresight of Mr. Joe Wood, was the first tavern to abolish the bar compartments—in his case for the express purpose of serving matinée teas and theatre suppers—is to-day a well-patronized professional rendezvous under the fresh style of George Mozart's

Café. The New and the Duke of York's Theatres, respectively backed by Wyndham's and the Garrick Theatres in Charing Cross Road, may be said to have appreciably discounted the Strand as a playgoing centre and an actors' promenade. Relative to this, the far-reaching importance of the Strand in the old days was very pointedly voiced by a histrion after returning to London from an ill-starred Australian tour. With his associates he found himself stranded in an up-country town. Devoid of funds, they were in the last throes of despair. No rude shanty, miscalled a "hotel," would take them in, and all he, their leading man, could say out of the anguish of his heart was this : "And here we are, eight thousand miles away from the Bun Shop !"

When the London Coliseum made its original bold appeal to the pleasure-seeking public with four spectacular shows per day (alternately *Donnybrook Fair* and *The Derby*), time was not ripe for such an innovation. Nor can we imagine that it ever will be. Expectations of filling the huge auditorium at noon, while hotel guests and ladies out shopping would have luncheon in mind, were altogether too sanguine. As the sequel proved, the owning company went into liquidation. Under its present auspices success has all along attended the policy of featuring an afternoon and evening show. Country folk who marvel at the almost instantaneous rising of the curtain on the next "act" or "turn" in an entirely different setting may not be aware that a revolving stage admits of the scenes, however elaborate, being built up prematurely.

The originator of the twice-daily variety show was Josiah Ritchie, of the Royal Aquarium, Westminster. This the late Sir Edward Moss (of the Moss and Stoll Empires) avowedly sought to improve upon by building the London Hippodrome for combined equestrian and

aquatic performances with incidental varieties of the highest class. The disappearance of the arena and the scrapping of its water tank in the year 1909 paved the way for regular presentations of revues and a Christmas pantomime. Since October 1920 the Hippodrome has possessed a dramatic licence.

Built as the English Opera Houses and employing a double company of principal artistes for the production of *Ivanhoe*—an ambitious scheme which involved the late R. D'Oyly Carte in serious financial loss—that noble pile, the Palace Theatre, when it 'verted to variety, was the third and last amusement resort identified with the successful management of Charles Morton, "The Father of the Halls." Shaftesbury Avenue contains no less than five playhouses—the Shaftesbury, Queen's, Globe, Lyric, and Apollo Theatres. These, with the others already enumerated due north of Charing Cross—the Prince's, in Broad Street, Bloomsbury ; the Winter Garden, in Drury Lane ; the Fortune, in Russell Street, and the Kingsway, in Great Queen Street ; not to speak of the Prince of Wales's and the Criterion—go far to stress the opening up of a new Theatreland remote from the busy Strand. In addition, the war brought about the conversion of the London Pavilion and the Oxford Music Hall into regular playhouses licensed by the Lord Chamberlain. The demolition of the last-named for the setting up in its place of a Lyons Corner House was fraught with general regret. Now surely there should be a bright future in store for Sir Alfred Butt's Dominion Theatre close to the Horse Shoe Hotel at the juncture of New Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road. A finer position for playhouse enterprise than the long-cleared site of Meux's Brewery scarcely declares itself anywhere. This brings us back to Bloomsbury, concerning which much yet remains to be said.

# XI

# BLOOMSBURY

# XI

## BLOOMSBURY

The happy hunting ground for the properly guided excursionist—Creating a new parish—A King's statue on a church steeple—A horological curiosity at the Imperial Hotel, Southampton Row—Origin of the name Theobald's Road—Old Temple Bar in Theobald's Park—Lamb's Conduit and the story of London's early water supply—The Lamb Tavern—The Friend at Hand—Sir William Harpur and Bedford Row—The Harpur Arms Inn—The Victory Cinema—Bloomsbury Square—Place-names round the district—The twentieth-century Bohemia—The guest-houses of Southampton Row—A novelist's acquaintance with Cosmo Place.

FEW London districts have been endowed with so many phases of public interest as Bloomsbury. Historical and literary associations, the Foundling Hospital, the British Museum, Mudie's Library, University College, and the Hospital opposite served by its own medical professors, the College of Preceptors, the Headquarters of the Young Men's Christian Association, the Administrative Offices of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, the accepted region of superior guest-houses, boarding establishments, and tenements corresponding to our conception of a Twentieth-Century "Bohemia" whence authors as yet unknown to fame send out their MSS.—all within easy reach of the City and West End ; well-laid-out squares receiving the pure air of the Northern Heights : these are among the inducements for a day's round of sight-seeing, preferably under proper guidance, presented to the Country Cousin in Town.

On the historical side we have already explained the severance of what bore the name of Bloomsbury Village, with its parish church and the unlovely High Street

leading to the gibbet and pound at the cross roads, from the infinitely more genteel portion of Bloomsbury (anciently described as "Lomesbury Manor") by the formation of New Oxford Street. Despite its proximity to "The Rookery of St. Giles" there had been a much earlier distinction drawn between the airy residential and the overcrowded area of the Duke of Bedford's estate, to wit, in the year 1730. This came about through the Parliamentary sanction for the building of fifty new churches within the Bills of Mortality wheresoever a large majority of the inhabitants expressed a desire to separate themselves from a parish by creating another with some of the land belonging to the parent parish, erecting a church at their own expense, and making a suitable provision for the support of the poor. The result of such an agitation was the laying out, first, of Hart Street, so called after an important hostelry, the White Hart, in Theobald's Road, and the building at its western extremity of St. George's Church, which, as regards the crowning architectural feature, cannot be matched by any other religious edifice in the whole of the Metropolis. Designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, it has a fine Corinthian portico, and westward of it a tower surmounted by a pyramidal steeple of steps and a statue of George I in a Roman *toga*. As an example of the ridicule generally heaped upon this sanctification of an English sovereign of foreign extraction, a popular epigram of the period, said to have been penned by Horace Walpole, ran as follows :

"When Harry the Eighth left the Pope in the lurch,
He ruled over England as head of the Church ;
But George's good subjects, the Bloomsbury people,
Instead of the Church made him head of the steeple."

Intelligent strangers, after learning the name of the

tutelar saint from the notice-board, have been known to ask a policeman or passers-by the precise significance of the statuesque oddity perched aloft without receiving an answer at all convincing.

OLD VIEW OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, BLOOMSBURY

Less conspicuous, because not clearly outlined against the sky, is a smaller piece of sculpture in connection with an ingenious mechanical contrivance on the façade of the Imperial Hotel in Southampton Row, facing Russell Square. As long as we can remember Bennett's wonderful

clock in Cheapside has had a peculiar fascination for the country sightseer, according to his own restricted ideas of London's varied attractions. To miss that would subject him to almost as great a reproach as to neglect visiting the usual show places. Though far removed from the City's roar and bustle, and quite off the beaten track of the excursionist, he may, after inquiring his way thereto, feast his eyes upon a similar curiosity of even more novel construction. This consists of a chiming clock with the clappers of five bells set in motion every quarter of an hour. Above it is a large human head supposed to keep watch over London, which at intervals of fifteen seconds rolls its eyes and also opens its mouth to announce the time of day simultaneous with the chiming of the quarters. The inner circle of the dial shows the signs of the zodiac, while the hands bear upon them respectively a representation of the sun and moon. Originally the clock, located in a tower on the roof of the hotel, could be seen afar off from the west, but the subsequent addition of upper stories has somewhat discounted its utility as a landmark and, moreover, caused the details to become obscured by other ornamentation. A real work of Art made abroad expressly in accordance with the instructions of the directors of the Imperial Hotel, its like probably does not exist elsewhere in the British Isles. Out of consideration for the slumbers of the guests the chimes are automatically hushed at 10 p.m. until 7.15 a.m., and, like the strokes of Big Ben and Great Paul, they were never heard at any time during the war.

Our mention above of Theobald's Road inspires the reflection that, since it was used by James I *en route* by way of High Holborn and Kingsgate Street for his favourite hunting seat at Theobald's in Hertfordshire—hence the name—Sir Henry Meux, the owner of the

great Bloomsbury Brewery, long ago demolished, must have had the eternal fitness of things in mind when he purchased from the City Fathers the numbered stones of Old Temple Bar for re-erection at the entrance to his country home, Theobald's Park, near Cheshunt, where it may now be seen.

Until midway in the eighteenth century most of the Bloomsbury district stretching northwards was cited in maps, deeds, and records under the name of Lamb's Conduit Fields. And thereby an interesting story awaits unfolding. For hundreds of years the daily inconveniences arising from the fact that water for all purposes had to be fetched from the only available sources—the River of Wells (so-called because it received the sweet waters of Bagnigge, Sadler's, and Clerken Wells), the Old Bourn, the Langbourn, and the Wallbrook—must have been sorely felt by our ancestors in London Town. Then there came a time when, the City having extended some distance beyond the walls, these streams no longer sufficed for the greatly increased population ; and consequently the citizens were compelled to go for their water supplies to the wells themselves. Things remained in this unsatisfactory state until the twenty-first year of the reign of Henry III, which witnessed a serious effort on the part of one Gilbert Sanford to obtain permission from the Earl of Craven to convey water by means of leaden pipes from the swift-flowing streams meandering through the fields of Bayswater and Marylebone. Such permission being granted, Sanford built a large Conduit House of stone about a hundred yards from Craven Hill, the residence of the Craven family down to the year 1700, when they removed to Craven House in Drury Lane.

The outcome of this gracious concession in the public interest was the setting up of nine conduits (or cisterns)

connected by pipes underground for supplying the City with fresh water. Later, inclusive of "bosses" in less-frequented thoroughfares, the number amounted to twenty, all which were placed under the control of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen and subject to an annual inspection on horseback on September 18th. When all the conduits outwards from the City had been visited, the Lord Mayor entertained the company at dinner in a banqueting house specially built for the purpose near the fountain-head at Bayswater, and finished up the day by hunting the hare. The most distant conduit standard was not taken down until the year 1820. Since then the entire district round about has been built upon, but Conduit and Spring Streets serve to remind us of its centuries-old location. A similar link with London's ancient water supply is the Conduit Street which received its name from the spring-head in the meadows known as "Conduit Mead" now swallowed up by Old Bond Street.

Of the City conduits the principal were the Standard on Cornhill, the Great Conduit in Central Cheapside, the Poultry Conduit and the Little Conduit on the site of our Peel Statue. Historians aver that on occasions of public rejoicing, such as coronations and Royal "progresses" through the City, the Cheapside conduits ran with wine for the gratification of the populace. One can well imagine the gatherings which ordinarily must have taken place at these substantial "stand-pipes," where apprentices, serving-men, and serving-maids indulged in chatter, scandal, love-making, and trade talk. Hither they repaired to supply their masters and mistresses with water not once a day, but many times in the course of their wakeful hours—perchance more often than was really necessary in view of the promiscuous company they would be certain to meet. Occasionally the peace-

fulness of the errand would be marred by angry words and fisticuffs, resulting in blackened eyes and bleeding noses before the City Watch succeeded in separating the combatants. All which interfered sadly with the traffic in the busiest thoroughfares owing to the great number of idlers gathered around to witness the squabble.

Of the two conduit standards set up outside Ludgate and Newgate, one stood at the Fleet Street end of Shoe Lane, and the other on the spot now occupied by Snow Hill Police Station, near St. Sepulchre's Church. In the year 1577 the latter was found to have fallen into such a ruinous condition that William Lamb, a member of the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers, took upon himself the cost of its thorough repair. In addition, by laying some two thousand yards of leaden pipes, he connected it with a new conduit in the fields off Holborn, just where in modern times the same spring of clear, crystal water was made to feed the drinking-fountain beside the gates of the Foundling Hospital at the head of the street named after him. So well did this public benefactor gauge the best position of his stone structure for the convenience of future generations of Londoners that he carried the pipes a considerable distance southward to the cross roads of the present day. Lamb's Conduit was not removed until the year 1746, although the City conduits generally had been put out of action in 1728 for the alleged reason that people should encourage the enterprise of Sir Hugh Myddleton and his Royal patron James I, by having the New River water laid on to their houses. Into the history of that gigantic achievement, which was solemnly celebrated on September 23, 1613, we cannot here enter.

To be honoured with a tavern sign is to be numbered among the nation's worthies. Situate within a few yards of that noble institution the Foundling Hospital

(now, unhappily, vacant), the Lamb has for many years merited local renown on account of its attractiveness and the purveying of honest Old English fare in a style suited to the palates of cultured folk, who make it their daily luncheon resort. Guilford Street still houses well-known men and women in the professional world, while others come from homely lodgings farther afield. A special contributory factor to the popularity of the Lamb Tavern luncheon-room is the rapidly changing character of Brunswick and Mecklenburg Squares and the district around them from a residential to a business quarter. The pictorial embellishments of the cosy saloon lounge conduce to make casual patrons linger over their bodily refreshment. Nor do the frequenters of the humbler bars receive less consideration at the hands of the licensee—dainty food snacks, including home-made hot meat-patties, being served until the closing hour.

The odd sign of the Friend at Hand in Herbrand Street, off Guilford Street, carries us back in spirit to the time when, before the advent of "tied houses," a publican was regarded as "a guide, philosopher, and friend" to a lonely man who, spending his leisure evenings at a favourite tavern, had no one else to consult in a case of emergency. There are still some members of "The Trade" into whose ear a tale of woe may be confidently poured with the certainty of receiving sage counsel, but such comforting mortals must nowadays be far between to find.

Like William Lamb, another long-departed worthy honoured with the name of a street and a tavern (or rather in his case an inn) sign, was Sir William Harpur, Lord Mayor in the year 1562, who, dying in 1573, bequeathed the land upon which that fine, broad thoroughfare, Bedford Row, and much scarcely less valuable house property both north and south of Theobald's

Road, afterwards arose, to the County town of Bedford, his birthplace, for the foundation of a perpetual Free School and the endowment of various charities there.

One half of the Harpur Arms was razed to the ground at the termination of the Great War for the erection of the Victory (since renamed Bloomsbury) Cinema adjoining—the other, as we write, stands desolate, with the entrance to its coachyard temporarily converted into a coffee-bar. This was really the last of the galleried inns on the Middlesex side of the Thames. Somewhat inconsistently, the wide passage leading to stables behind the Cross Keys, a few doors east of Harpur Street, is labelled Harpur Mews. With the exceptions of the derelict Harpur Arms and the comparatively modern Queen's Head Tavern (" established 1877, rebuilt 1912 ") all the licensed places of public resort lining Theobald's Road are up-to-date survivors of quaint inns or taverns which came into being when King James rode along it on his hunting excursions, as already referred to.

The nomenclature of the Bloomsbury district may now briefly engage our attention. In the nature of things the squares were not laid out more expeditiously, taking them altogether, than those of Mayfair, Marylebone, or Belgravia. The earliest of which we possess any authentic details was Southampton Square, on the site of Lomesbury Manor House. At a later period the name underwent a change to Bloomsbury Square. Here dwelt Richard Baxter, the eminent Nonconformist divine, in 1684. During the Gordon Riots in June 1780 Lord Mansfield had his mansion sacked and all its treasured pictures and books burned in the open square. In the year 1817 Benjamin Disraeli, the future Earl of Beaconsfield, came to reside with his father at No. 6, Bloomsbury Square, while the elder D'Israeli wrote *The Curiosities of Literature* and other voluminous works.

The early part of the nineteenth century brought Bloomsbury into prominence as the best-favoured residential suburb for City merchants, who had previously travelled no farther to and fro than Finsbury. Then building operations round the district commenced in earnest. Not to occupy too much space, the titles of the ground landlord and the association of other personages with a few place-names must suffice for our purpose.

Southampton Row and Street, Russell Square and Great Russell Street, Bedford Square, Tavistock Square and Place, owe their designations to Thomas Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, Marquis of Tavistock and Duke of Bedford, the father of Rachel, the wife of Lord William Russell, the patriot, who was beheaded in Lincoln's Inn Fields on July 21, 1683. Woburn Square and Place refer to the country seat of the ducal owner. Gordon Square keeps alive the memory of Lady Georgina Gordon, daughter of Alexander, the Fourth Duke of Gordon and wife of John, Sixth Duke of Bedford, who had married a daughter of the noble house of Torrington, made known to Londoners by Torrington Square. Queen Square, laid out in the reign of Queen Anne, was somewhat vaguely named after her. Great Ormond Street pays honour to the distinguished British general, James Butler, Duke of Ormond. Judd Street comprised the limited landed estate of Sir Andrew Judd, Lord Mayor in the year 1551, who bequeathed it to the endowment of a school at Tonbridge, Kent, his native place.

After having built nearly a thousand houses, great and small, around Bloomsbury, Decimus Burton boldly identified himself with Burton Crescent by means of his surname. The last two thoroughfares, in common with many more, such as Bernard and Hunter Streets, belong to the Bohemian quarter of the district. All the rest

may be said to consist of stately mansions, luxurious and private hotels, and boarding establishments. Southampton Row is particularly noticeable for the number of its guest-houses. In a little hairdresser's shop down Cosmo Place Mr. F. Anstey laid the scene of his vivacious novel, *The Tinted Venus*.

# XII

# PICCADILLY "CIRCUS"

# XII

## PICCADILLY "CIRCUS"

A topographical tangle—The London Pavilion—"The Lion Comique"—The Criterion Restaurant—Mounted police riding through the buffet—A famous coaching inn—Supper dances on high—The Argyll Rooms—The Café Riche—"The Pic."—Mott's—De Bourg's Restaurant and Waxworks—Scott's—Bill orders for the theatre—Oysters for the cat—Haymarket playhouses—Cinemas equipped for stage performances—"The Street of Adventure"—Feeding palaces galore—The Pall Mall Restaurant—Vanished taverns—Rayner's—The Royal Standard—The Trocadero Music Hall—The Piccadilly Theatre—Ham Yard, Great Windmill Street—"Sandwichmen"—The Hambone Club—Musicians in Archer Street—The Oriental Café.

MUCH as a man may know London, he can always find something fresh to learn. What is, perhaps, the busiest centre round the West End affords us an apt illustration of our meaning. A common impression, freely encouraged by topographers and the compilers of the guide-books, seems to prevail that the broad expanse of thoroughfare in which the London Pavilion, the Criterion Restaurant, and the entrance to the Tube Station are conspicuous features, form an integral portion of Piccadilly Circus. How far this runs counter to actuality reference to the *Post Office London Directory* would at once decide. If, as historians agree, Piccadilly owed its name to Piccadilla Hall, a noted public resort with gaming tables, bowling greens, and tennis courts, situate at the north-east corner of the Haymarket, the numbering of the houses westwards to Hyde Park and back again on the opposite side ably supports the tradition.

When John Nash cut through a region of mean dwellings for the construction of Lower Regent Street

and the Quadrant, he provided the curved façades of the familiar Circus immediately west of the White Bear Inn, and thereafter the isolated section of the fashionable street came to be known as Piccadilly East, though the numeration underwent no change. This term, however, applied only to half the width of the present roadway. In the days of the old London Pavilion, and prior to the Shaftesbury Avenue improvement, the spot now occupied by the Memorial Fountain and the flower women formed the base of a triangular island of shops, of which the apex stretched a considerable distance towards Coventry Street. This had the effect of creating two narrow thoroughfares, that on the south side being labelled, as now, Piccadilly, and that on the north containing the London Pavilion, Tichborne Street. To urge, therefore, that the Shaftesbury Fountain or the island refuge eastward of it stands in the centre of the Circus is wholly incorrect. At the same time, most Londoners who are apt to associate Piccadilly only with the straight line of shops and club-houses due west of Swan & Edgar's corner might be sorely puzzled were they challenged to account for their precise location anywhere between the Tube Station and the Haymarket or Great Windmill Street. Here it may be well to mention that much confusion formerly arose in the public mind through the indiscriminate application of the term " Regent Circus " to widely distant intersections of Nash's stucco-fronted street. That such an anomaly could have been suffered to exist so long, until some wiseacre suggested the present-day nomenclature of Piccadilly Circus and Oxford Circus, in perfect consonance with the world-famous thoroughfares thus indicated, seems astonishing.

But for the prominent gilt lettering high up on the façade, a stranger might easily conceive the London Pavilion to be a municipal building. Its chaste archi-

tecture and the felicitous utilization of every square foot of the triangular ground-plot merit the utmost commendation. Further than a brief statement of its rebuilding in the year 1884, and sundry allusions to the home of the "Lion Comique" of a bygone era, the history of this post-war legitimate playhouse is not to be met with in the guide-books or ordinary works of reference. Like many another Victorian palace of pleasure, the original, hemmed in between matter-of-fact business premises and owned by Emil Lobil, a Swiss, aforetime waiter at Scott's famous oyster-house, the proprietor also of the Café Cardinal in Great Windmill Street, had a quite insignificant corridor approach with a crystal gas-lighting device as the sole exterior attraction.

For several years at first the London Pavilion was little better than a sing-song, a sixpenny refreshment ticket entitling anyone to admission and a drink. Practically unaltered since it had housed Dr. Kahn's Anatomical Museum, the long, narrow auditorium consisted of a gallery on one side, a row of boxes on the other, marble-top tables flanked by upholstered seats which afterwards gave place to numbered stalls, and no less than half a dozen drinking bars. The chairman was, of course, a survival of the good old days of the English inn, where the guests assembled "at the table of the host" (hence the modern expression *table d'hôte*) for the evening meal found themselves liable to be called upon to sing or otherwise contribute to the enlivenment of the company. Until R. E. Villiers obtained possession of the London Pavilion and promptly converted it into a regular music-hall, this grandiose personage gave out the various items of the vocalization in the following terms: "Mr. —— will now favour us with a song entitled . . ." How much more intimate this

than the formal announcement, " Mr. [or Miss] —— will appear next," of later years!

As we call to mind the old London Pavilion, the stage projected well forward from the back wall, leaving a convenient alcove for one of the drinking-bars on either hand and having an " apron " in front of the pillared proscenium. This arrangement, so different from the cramped space between the footlights and the " front cloth " or " first-entrance " scene of the modern variety theatre, enabled an artiste to step out of the picture as it were and make himself perfectly at home with his audience.

To R. E. Villiers belonged the credit of discovering the greatest " Lion Comique " of the day and engaging him exclusively for the London Pavilion. This sobriquet had already been bestowed by J. J. Poole, of the South London Palace, upon George Leybourne, of " Champagne Charlie " fame. There were also Alfred G. Vance, self-styled "The Great Vance," whose *Walking in the Zoo* enjoyed an extraordinary run of success, and Arthur Lloyd, best known perhaps for his songs *I Like to be a Swell* and *Not for Joseph !* " Jolly " John Nash, the laughter-maker, was in a class by himself, while character-comedians had something really " catchy " in the songs they sang. Beside George Hastings Macdermott, however, all other music-hall vocalists faded into insignificance. Thanks to his excellent training as an actor at the old Grecian Theatre in the City Road, and a voice that penetrated the remotest corner of any hall, the rapturous applause attending his first song, *Where was Moses when the Light went out ?* presaged an enduring engagement at the London Pavilion. Long afterwards " The Great Macdermott " aroused his audiences to the utmost enthusiasm with the famous Jingo song (*We don't want to Fight, but by jingo if we do !*)

during the crisis which led up to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8. To the end of his regime at the famous Hall of Song, Mr. Villiers adhered to the policy of engaging all the most popular vocal artistes, with a result that two dozen such "turns" often figured in the same programme. Small wonder that Dame Fortune smiled upon him, and when the old Metropolitan Board of Works bought out the property for the Shaftesbury Avenue Improvement Scheme no inconsiderable share of the sum of £104,000, assessed by arbitration, fell to his lot.

In these days of luxurious feeding establishments one might opine that the Criterion Restaurant would not have been permitted to occupy its commanding position as the only assertive example of architectural stateliness akin to that of the London Pavilion. As we know, the Holborn, the Trocadero, and the Princes were built for quite different purposes from what they now fulfil; while elsewhere round the Town such resorts for prandial pleasure scarcely arrest public notice at all. Erected on the site of the White Bear Inn, a celebrated hostelry which for upwards of a hundred years had maintained a regular service of stage-coaches to Bath, Bristol, Salisbury, Dorchester, and Exeter—also to Dover *en route* for Paris—this superbly appointed restaurant and social rendezvous, with a pretty playhouse located entirely underground, was functionally opened on March 21, 1878. Country excursionists usually express astonishment at having to *descend* a flight of stairs to the gallery of the Criterion Theatre; there had, however, been a precedent for such a constructive novelty at the Opera Comique and Globe Theatres, set back to back in Wych Street before the Strand improvement gave us Aldwych and Kingsway.

Originally the present buffet of the Criterion Res-

taurant was a mere passage-way with a long bar extending from Piccadilly into Jermyn Street. This was at all times crowded after dusk, but abnormally so on Boat Race, Derby, and Lord Mayor's Show nights, when, to effect a clearance, the mounted police crossed the pavement and rode through. Such demonstrations fostered by the excitements of an eventful day afflict the directors of the Criterion no more. Rather less than ten years ago " The Cri." was the first of the feeding palaces of the West End to introduce " Supper Dances." These met with such signal favour that the transference of the mazy round to the flat roof of the edifice suggested itself as " a consummation devoutly to be wished." Unfortunately the vagaries of the English climate precluded the possibility of making the American Roof Garden an institution. As a compromise a scenic representation of Lake Como with a star-lit Italian sky captivated all beholders. On the opening night and thenceforward the dancers found it hard to realize that they were under cover. Only a fresh arrival reporting a shower of rain in Piccadilly could have dispelled the illusion.

Londoners past middle age will recollect the compulsory closing of the Argyll Rooms, now Messrs. Lyons's Trocadero Restaurant, in the year 1878. This utterly unjustifiable proceeding removed the very last public dance-hall from the night life of the West End. Like the Holborn Casino, it was extremely well conducted, and as much patronized by music lovers on account of its promenade concerts as for " the light fantastic." In Early Victorian days, after the failure of his initial enterprise on similar lines at the Royal Adelaide Gallery, then styled Laurent's Casino, in the Strand, Monsieur Laurent's augmented band was considered to be the finest in the kingdom. According to the oldest inhabitant, Mr. Arthur Gorton, who, born in

Great Windmill Street ninety years ago, once confided his memories of the neighbourhood to a Press representative, "A gallery which ran round the hall was nearly always filled with spectators. Dancers were controlled by a dignified Frenchman, M. Gounod, who used to walk about with a gold-knobbed cane. If he saw anyone offending good taste he held up his hand warningly. When offenders neglected his caution he ordered them to leave. And they had to leave, too! Late at night there were rows of carriages waiting to take the dancers home, and young *beaux* would buy bouquets from flower-sellers at the door for their partners."

This authoritative statement would seem to give the lie direct to the popular notion that the Argyll Rooms were a sink of iniquity, the more so since they did not even answer to the description of a "night-house." From another scrap of autobiography dealing with London life in the sixties we gather that eleven o'clock was the usual closing hour of the Argyll Rooms; whereupon such of the patrons as were not at once whirled away in cabs or carriages made a wild rush for the Café Riche on the site of the Tube Station to secure tables for the best of suppers at cheaper rates than those charged anywhere close at hand, or in "The Street of Adventure." Having sated their appetites at the Café Riche, the gay young spirits constituting the rougher elements of night-birds passed into "The Pic.," an inferior dance hall adjoining, where, on the slightest provocation, fisticuffs and hat-smashing relieved their pent-up feelings. For a more simple repast frequenters of the Argyll Rooms partook of oysters, lobsters, chops, steaks, kidneys, or Welsh-rarebits at Scott's, the internal appointments of which comprised high wooden boxes resembling the family pews in a country church. For those whose soles still itched for a dance there still remained open Mott's

in Foley Street, and many another gilded hall, as little comparable for good conduct with the Argyll Rooms as the notorious " night-houses " of Panton Street.

Returning to our patriarchal authority, Mr. Gorton informed the ubiquitous interviewer that exactly opposite his home on the west side of Great Windmill Street was what bore the style of De Bourg's Restaurant and Waxworks, its portico being graced by a life-sized figure holding aloft a gas-lamp which served as a beacon to anyone walking up the Haymarket. Among other sideshows of this exhibition were *tableaux vivants*, boxing contests, a centrifugal railway, and the Jibaros Indians.

The following anecdote concerning Scott's renowned corner restaurant will enable us to take leave of the interesting old gentleman who has so conveniently come into our purview. In former days, ere newspaper advertising entirely superseded the showing of theatre bills in hairdressers' shops and refreshment-house windows, " bill orders " for the play helped to fill the auditorium everywhere to much better purpose than the modern method of " papering " it with " deadheads." As the recipient of two of these vouchers entitling their holder to twice as many seats in an " omnibus box," Mrs. Scott prevailed upon Mr. Gorton and his wife (Miss Snow, of Snow's Coffee House in Sherwood Street) one evening to accompany her and her daughter to the play. After the performance the party went to have supper in private at Scott's, where, seated on a high chair, the table being already laid, was Mrs. Scott's favourite cat. Presently the waiter came up with a large trayful of oysters, to a due proportion of which, in her customary manner, Mrs. Scott helped the cat on its own special plate. Had a pint of stout been served with it the invited participators in the repast could not have felt more surprised.

Although the Haymarket now contains three legiti-

mate playhouses of the highest class, irrespective of a palatial cinema equipped with a stage for incidental varieties—near-by, too, is another, the Plaza, at the Lower Regent Street corner of Jermyn Street—it is singularly devoid of conspicuous taverns and feeding establishments akin to those which formerly contributed to invest this sedate thoroughfare of to-day with the description of "The Street of Adventure," characterized by a blaze of exterior illumination until the small hours of the morning. Out of the whole number of such resorts ministering to the needs of the hungry man the Pall Mall Restaurant, originally the Café de l'Europe, built on the site of "The Little Theatre in the Haymarket," alone remains. As regards the well-remembered taverns of our time, the Wellington, at the corner of Charles Street, has been absorbed by a bank, and the Black Horse by the Capitol Cinema. Rayner's, the sole existing rendezvous for the consumption of good liquors and the proud possession of Messrs. Patrick & MacGregor, Ltd., of "The Coal Hole" in the Strand, is, of course, a modern structure forming part of the block of the renamed Haymarket (or Jermyn) Hotel overhead and the Tube Station. Round the corner, facing the London Pavilion, Appenrodt's comestible shop may not strike the stranger seeking refreshment to be endowed with an Excise licence by virtue of its evolution out of the Royal Standard Tavern, neither does Scott's in any way suggest opportunities for bar-lounging. On the other hand, we note that St. Peter's Church, in Great Windmill Street (built 1867), has been acquired by Messrs. Lyons & Co., Ltd., for an extension of the Trocadero Restaurant. This is probably the only instance on record of a religious edifice being sacrificed for "the pleasures of the table." When formerly its immediate neighbour was the Argyll Rooms and later the

Trocadero Music Hall, the juxtaposition gave rise to many heartburnings in " Christian " family circles.

The absorption of the Avenue Tavern, at the corner of Shaftesbury Avenue and Great Windmill Street, not long ago by a bank affords us yet another example of the trend of the times ; but the St. James's, the Red Lion, and the Lyric doubtless meet all requirements. The recent effacement of the Queen's Head at the Sherwood Street extremity of Denman Street, behind the electric signs of the so-called " Circus," for Mr. Edward Laurillard's new Piccadilly Theatre, emphasizes the extinction of licensed " houses " still further. In bygone days the designation Ham Yard, adjoining the Lyric Tavern, was a singularly appropriate one for the headquarters of the " Sandwichmen " who paraded the gutters of our streets between a pair of boards in the interests of theatrical advertisement. As the sole mode of publicity, apart from window-billing, until playgoers made a habit of consulting the daily newspaper announcements, this had a great vogue. The printed slip worded " Archibald Nagel, Advertising Contractor, Ham Yard, W.," on the foot of the boards, was almost as familiar to pedestrians as the cross-slips " To-Night " and " Every Evening." In the south-west corner of Ham Yard to-day will be found the Hambone Club, with a pictorial sign over the entrance. The Palais de Luxe Cinema, facing the Yard, is an altogether creditable conversion of a coachmaker's show-rooms. Archer Street contains the large club premises of the twain Musicians' Union and the National Orchestral Association, whose members, either to pay their subscriptions or to hear word passed round of a " deputy " being sought for, attend in such force some time previous to the Saturday matinées as to bar completely the progress of strangers and possibly to convey the impression of a workers' hiring market.

This, indeed, it may be, seeing that the street also harbours a Workers' Union. In conclusion, close to the stage-door of the Apollo Theatre, with a hairdresser's shop in between, is the Oriental (formerly styled the Armenian) Café, where a variety of strange nationalities may be encountered until the midnight hour.

# XIII

# THE STREET OF PORTLAND STONE

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## THE STREET OF PORTLAND STONE

A wholesale upheaval of Crown property—The rising value of ground-rents—The County Fire Office—The New Gallery Kinema—The commemoration stone of Messrs. Hedges & Butler's new premises—The Prince Regent and John Nash—The Quadrant pillars—Foley House—The Sadler's Arms Inn—"Les Gobelins" Restaurant—Verrey's—The Café Royal—Oddenino's Imperial Restaurant—The Café Monico—The Moore and Burgess Minstrels—Wong's Chinese Restaurant—Introduction of the cabaret show—"The Cave of the Calf"—Murray's Dance Club—Blanchard's—Louis Tussaud's Waxworks—The Royal Polytechnic Institution—"Professor Pepper's Ghost"—"Moving Pictures"—"Maskelyne's Theatre of Magical Mysteries"—Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's Entertainment—Corney Grain—The Queen's Hall—Archdeacon Dunbar's Sunday concerts—Langham Place and the Duke of Portland.

REGENT STREET may now at last be said to have emerged from its transition state. Visitors drawn from the ends of the earth to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley must have lamented the chaotic appearance of London's fashionable shopping thoroughfare. During the next long summer season of the Wembley Show, although Colonials were then a negligible quantity, Americans and country excursionists again found themselves compelled to pick their way round builders' carts between prosaic wooden hoardings where formerly attractive shop-windows had met their view. Levelled to the ground, too, was that familiar landmark the County Fire Office, with its columnar frontage, arched footway, and figure of Britannia on the summit at the eastern extremity of the Quadrant. Since that time the work of reconstruction has progressed satisfactorily until to-day we witness the result—a superb vista of Portland stone.

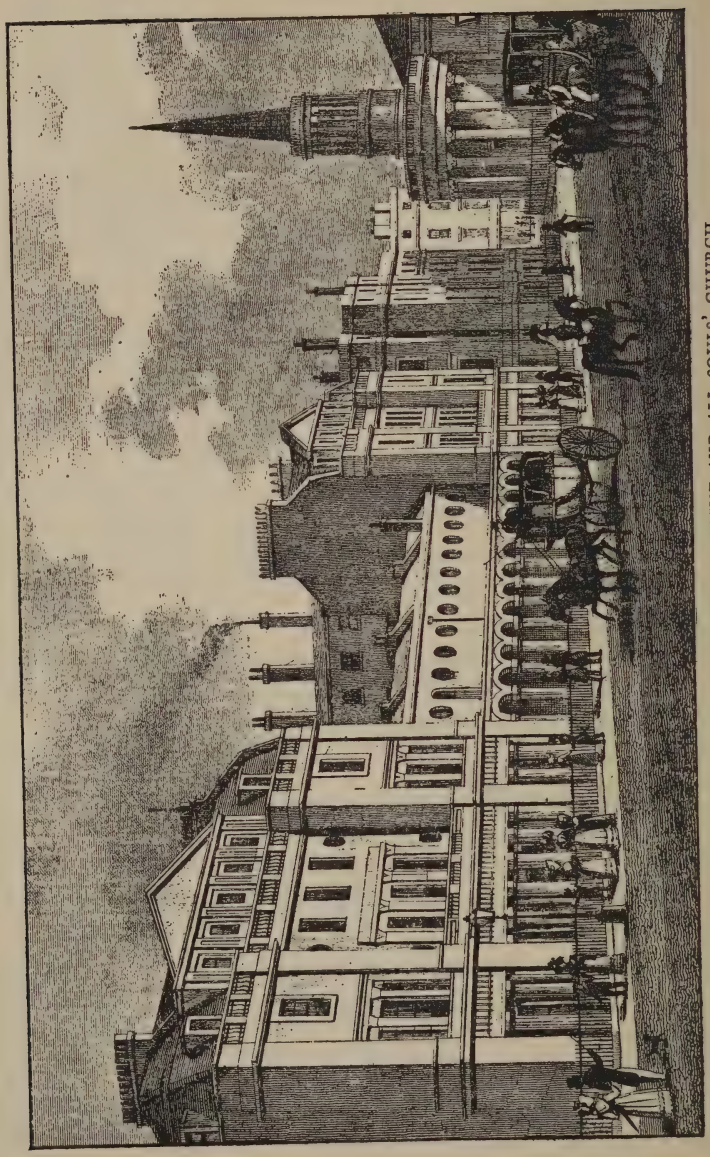
It is odd to reflect that, despite the hard drinking of our sires, Regent Street itself has never within living memory afforded strangers the least facilities for the assuagement of human thirst. Such "houses of call" as Londoners have known to exist had perforce to be sought up narrow side turnings. With the exceptions of the Crown in Heddon Street, the Sadler's Arms (latterly converted into a motor-spirit depôt) in Swallow Street, and the Regent in Air Street—all three involved in the general clearance—these may yet be visited. Moreover, not merely in the wonderful shopping centre, but throughout the whole length of Lower Regent Street to Waterloo Place, and also beyond Oxford Circus as far as Great Castle Street, strangers' inquiries for the nearest tavern must at all times have been rife.

Noting that the stately stone piles of the Quadrant and the rest of Regent Street have not been set any farther back—land is, of course, too valuable to warrant the proportional sacrifice of ground-rents—the question may be asked: "What prompted the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, as the custodians of Crown property, to bring about such a wholesale upheaval?" Relevant to this thought was the *raison d'être* of the entire rebuilding of the New Gallery Kinema, which, formed out of the shell of the largest West End picture gallery, had its functional opening by Sir George and Lady Alexander no longer ago than January 14, 1913.

The plain truth of the matter is that all the leases fell in variously between the years 1914 and 1920, wherefore the Commissioners, with a keen eye to revenue, seized the earliest opportunity after the war to enhance the value of the Royal estate. As showing how ground-rents of the refashioned Regent Street compare with those originally fixed, a framed receipt in the private sanctum of Messrs. Hedges & Butler, the well-known wine

merchants, cites £13 4s. 8½d. paid direct to Queen Victoria for half of the year 1844, with the footnote : " Be pleased to bring this notice when you call to pay the rent." Different, indeed, from the formal " demand notes " of the twentieth century ! " We do not get that nice old-fashioned politeness now when we pay £1,000 per half-year to the Woods and Forests Department," said Mr. Frank Butler to a Press representative at the inauguration of their new premises on August 29, 1922. On the same occasion the sealing of a commemoration stone enclosing newspapers of that day's issue, a sovereign and a half-sovereign in gold, a £5 Bank of England note, a pound and a ten-shilling Treasury note, and several bottles of vintage wine made an interesting little ceremonial. It was also announced to the company that when the fresh lease expired in eighty years' time the then head of the firm would cause the stone to reveal its contents. Founded in Hungerford Street, off the Strand, a year after the Great Fire of London, the famous wine business has flourished through the reigns of twelve English monarchs, having been transferred to its present location in 1818. During the late war Messrs. Hedges & Butler performed a real public service by allowing their vast cellars to be used as air-raid shelters.

The laying out of Regent Street now calls for notice. Wild rake though he was, the Prince Regent had high artistic aims. Dissatisfied with the hardly pretentious Carlton House, where the Duke of York's column stands to-day, as a Royal residence, he conceived the idea of a suburban palace in Marylebone Park, and a noble stretch of thoroughfare named (like the Park) after him lined with fine buildings leading directly to it. The carrying out of this bold scheme he entrusted to the greatest architect of the day, John Nash. As an earnest of the



LANGHAM PLACE, WITH FOLEY HOUSE AND ALL SOULS' CHURCH

style of houses considered worthy to grace the new roadway, Nash at once set up for his own occupation a stately mansion with an outer court on the east side of Lower Regent Street. This has only within the last few years been demolished. What still bears, and always will bear, the name of the Quadrant, since Nash found it impossible to cut through Piccadilly, had, according to the original design, a colonnade over both pavements supported by nearly three hundred fluted iron pillars that unfortunately excluded the light of day from the shop windows, and, after repeated representations to the agents of the Crown, was removed in the year 1848. Well into our own time these pillars were suffered to lie ingloriously on the foreshore of Battersea Park. When John Nash extended his operations due north of Oxford Circus, a fresh difficulty arose. The staking out of this portion of Regent Street received a rude check at the sharp bend westwards formed by Foley House (now supplanted by the Langham Hotel), whose owner, on acquiring the site from his relative the Duke of Portland, forbade the erection of any building whatsoever likely to obstruct his view of the Hampstead Heights which he so much enjoyed. Here, then, we discover the cause of the inordinate width of Portland Place, for the Foley covenant placed no restriction upon the building of houses on either side. As a matter of fact the Crown property stopped short at Langham Place, and so the projected Royal Palace in Regent's Park came to naught.

Taking its vast area into account, the Regent Street of John Nash's day must surely have displaced or left standing some ancient hostelry with coaching facilities on to the Oxford Road. This assumption proves to be correct. Way back in the year 1682 there came to be built on a plot of ground between Vigo Street and Leicester (now Heddon) Street, described in old maps

as " Stable Yard," the Sadler's Arms Inn, and thenceforward the adjoining land received the name of " The Sadler's Arms Yard." The paucity of further information on the subject leaves us to infer that the inn enjoyed pride of position and importance among the various convivial haunts round the district. All that we really know is that quite early in Queen Victoria's reign it made way for the New Gallery, so called in contradistinction to the smaller permanent houses of pictorial art in the Bond Street quarter; and to this the time-honoured Excise licence of the Sadler's Arms automatically passed. Subsequently the erection of a tavern displaying the same sign in Swallow Street was sanctioned ; but, true to traditional usage, the serving of excisable liquors at the New Gallery brooked no interference. Thus it happened that the like privilege descended to the proprietors of the New Gallery Kinema, with the difference that, pursuant to the stern mandates of the L.C.C., their excisable refreshments had of necessity to be confined to the beautiful Tudoresque *brasserie*—the old Sadler's Arms cellar—beneath the spacious Waiting Hall or Crush Room in Heddon Street. Since then, specifically at the commencement of the year 1915, when Mr. Victor Rena took over the catering, this annexe was converted into " Les Gobelins " Restaurant, a title fully merited by its large mural adornments and a fine reproduction of the original Gobelins tapestries. To-day the fame of the newest-established Regent Street feeding palace ranks high.

The disappearance of Verrey's familiar blue-fronted restaurant from the corner of Hanover Street was a sad incidental to the thorough-paced activities of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. Now removed a few doors northwards and extending a considerable distance to the rear, with side entrances in Princes and Hanover

Streets, it may indeed have marched with the times, yet it hardly recalls former glories. The story of the original Café Verrey reads like a romance. Coming over to this country from Lausanne during the early part of the last century, M. Verrey opened an unpretentious confectioner's shop on the spot which no longer bears his name, the site having been leased to the Saxone Shoe Company. Almost at once the news was spread abroad that he had a beautiful daughter distinguished by great personal charm of manner. Such an unfailing attraction for the bucks and *beaux* of the day conduced to make the little café quite a fashionable rendezvous, with a result that M. Verrey took out a wine licence and added to his ordinary confections the preparation of French "kick-shaws." The climax to the ever-increasing custom was reached when Lord Petersham apostrophized Miss Verrey in a set of verses, of which the concluding lines ran as follows :

> "Thy mind—brightest gem—is the Temple of Love ;
> But bright as thou'rt fair, thou'rt pure as a dove ! "

Unhappily this adulation caused the lady's name to be bandied about with such vexatious familiarity that her father resolved to withdraw her from the business. By that time, however, Verrey's had won an enviable reputation for its epicurean repasts, and when, in mid-Victorian days, Herr George Krehl, a Wurtemberger, assumed the ownership, he attracted to "The Blue House" the most distinguished men in Politics, Literature, Science, and Art. Touching the transference of Verrey's palatial new premises to a less-conspicuous position, we have it on the authority of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests themselves that their policy is to reserve valuable corner sites for stately

establishments in the shopping interest rather than that they should be occupied by banks or even restaurants.

The nucleus of the Café Royal was a humble Glasshouse Street tavern where "Papa Nicol," as he loved to be called, introduced French cookery in February 1865. Dainty Parisian dishes and light wines held out singular allurements to disciples of the Higher Bohemianism seeking relief from the eternal chop, steak, and cut off the joint. Perfectly enchanting, too, was the bonhomie always to be met with at the Café Royal. Such success, indeed, attended this unique enterprise of the naturalized Burgundian, M. Daniel Thevenon (*anglice* Nicol), that very soon tables had to be booked in advance, and the forward extension of the premises into Regent Street became a requirement of prime necessity. Then, when the terrors of the Paris Commune sent hundreds of his countrymen and women to take refuge in London, the Café Royal reflected once and for all the normal life of the Gay City itself. Ever since those days of storm and stress it has maintained the enviable prestige won by the exercise of sheer business foresight and the art of making public feeding attractive. Superb management combined with an engaging personality brought much grist to the caterer's mill. Mr. Nicol died full of years and honours in February 1907, leaving the source of his wealth to the sole charge of the charming lady whom he had espoused. Down to the time of her fatal illness in September 1916 Madame Celestine de Nicol was a familiar figure at the Café Royal, being driven there every morning in a single-horse brougham from Regent House, Surbiton, which is encircled by a beautiful park.

The near-by Imperial Restaurant, better known perhaps as Oddenino's, took a high stand on account of its musical adjuncts to joyous feeding. We speak in the past tense because, having been the last such resort to

undergo demolition, it has not yet been rebuilt. Here Mr. Melville Gideon for many months at a stretch familiarized Londoners with the capricious ramifications of American ragtime. When at length he sought other fields of professional activity, Terpsichorean delights amid the strains of a magnificent orchestra took the place of keyboard eccentricity. Oddenino's was far-famed for its wonderful cuisine, a swift, silent service, the mazy dance, and an " atmosphere " difficult to define. Until the new Oddenino's arises on its original site, some approximation to these allurements may be enjoyed at the temporarily taken over Royal Adelaide Gallery in Agar Street, Strand.

By acquiring a coachyard off the north side of Piccadilly " Circus," a couple of young Swiss in the year 1879 found an eligible site for the Café Monico. It was at one time thought that the success of the Bohee Brothers' Minstrel Show given twice a day here would permanently fill the gap caused by the break-up of the Moore and Burgess Troupe in the old St. James's Hall across the way. The sequel to this experiment, however, was that the catering patronage assumed such proportions as to leave no room available for regular footlights attractions. If only to enjoy a new experience of strange dishes, chop-sticks, and bowls of tea, a casual visit to Wong's Chinese Restaurant adjoining may be confidently recommended.

As proclaimed by a pictorial sign, " The Cave of the Calf," in a cavernous retreat at the south-east corner of Heddon Street, Madame Strindberg successfully acclimatized the cabaret show in this country two years before the war. Bizarre decorations, a shallow stage, and supper-tables dotted about the floor brought back to our minds the nocturnal revels of the Cyder Cellars in Maiden Lane. A while later Murray's Dance Club in

Beak Street came into the ascendant, and, unlike the Cabaret Theatre, it still flourishes under the original name of Blanchard's. To what extent the cabarets have developed round the West End every votary of pleasure can attest. It may also recur to the bygone generation of sightseers that for several months in the year 1891 Nos. 206 and 208, Regent Street, where Messrs. Fuller afterwards set up their first American confections depôt, comprised what was intended to be a permanent Waxworks Exhibition. The fire which consumed Mr. Louis Tussaud's "speaking likenesses" of historical personages overhead happily spared "The Maiden" and other fearsome instruments of torture on loan from Nuremberg Castle in the basement.

Crossing Oxford Circus to the northern end of Regent Street, we may profitably renew our acquaintance with at least two public resorts which have changed their character. Most famous of all the instructional museums of the Victorian Era was the Royal Polytechnic Institution. Opened in the year 1838, this had an extraordinary vogue, and when its wonders might have begun to pall, "Professor Pepper's Ghost," first shown in July 1863, imparted to the newer rival of the Panopticon and the Royal Adelaide Gallery an added stimulus for visitation. On August 6, 1883, the old show place took up a fresh lease of utility as the headquarters of the Young Men's Christian Association. Who now remembers that it was in the Marlborough Hall of this vast educational edifice that the earliest public exhibition of "moving pictures" took place? On February 20, 1896, M. Trewey, the accredited agent of Messrs. Auguste & Louis Lumière, the French owners of a wondrous "Cinématographie" machine, which they claimed to be a marked advance upon the invention of Friese Greene, an Englishman, unspooled to a half-credulous matinée audience a series of

twelve short films, all of the " life-scenes " order, on a screen measuring no more than six feet wide by four feet six inches deep. The show itself occupied only twelve minutes, but the explanatory talk of an attendant lecturer filled out a full hour. M. Trewey afterwards exploited his *Cinématographie Séances*, as they were styled, at the Empire Theatre in Leicester Square, where they had a similarly successful run. This pioneer exhibition gave a decided impetus to native developments. Well within public recollection will be Mr. Alfred West's *Our Army and Navy*, which held the boards, so to speak, of the Polytechnic for a considerable time. To-day, as a distinct commercial enterprise, the " Poly. Cinema " ranks with that of the Philharmonic Hall in Great Portland Street.

Now designated Maskelyne's Theatre, and given up to magical mysteries, the St. George's Hall was for many years identified with " Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's Entertainment " of short plays and Mr. Corney Grain's humorous songs at the piano. Finally, the Queen's Hall, opened in November 1893, had its beginnings in the Langham Hall, where that bold cleric, Archdeacon Dunbar, drew crowds of music-lovers to his Sunday-evening concerts. Langham Place, by the way, perpetuates the memory of Sir James Langham, the owner of the estate bordering upon Regent Street and that of the Duke of Portland. This statement connotes the abortive attempt of John Nash, the renowned architect of the Prince Regent, to continue his majestic avenue into or even alongside Portland Place, which, a third of a mile long and one hundred and thirty feet wide, had already been laid out and built upon by the Brothers Adam, the creators of the Adelphi, in the year 1778.

# XIV

# THE HEART OF CLUBLAND

# XIV

## THE HEART OF CLUBLAND

London's outstanding thoroughfare for leisurely men—Chocolate-houses—The Thatched House Tavern—Misleading juxtaposition of two modern club houses—Introduction of chocolate into England—The Cocoa Tree Club—High play at White's Club—Brooks's—Crockford's—Arthur's—Boodle's—Pratt's Club—The Nineteen Hundred Club—Pickering Place—"At the Sign of the Coffee Mill"—Fashionable folk and the weighing scales—The St. James's Bazaar—Rumpelmayer's—Almack's Assembly Rooms—Festive gatherings and memorable entertainments—Willis's Rooms as a repository of Art—Internal havoc caused by an air-raid.

CLUBLAND has been so often written about by clubmen of literary proclivities that we hesitate to pen even a brief description of its alluring charm. At the same time it would be quite out of keeping with the nature of our itinerary were we to omit all reference to those historic social centres housed in princely mansions which help to dignify some of the finest streets of the West End.

Essentially a man's thoroughfare, perfectly innocent of any shop-window or show-room appealing to the feminine mind, St. James's Street seems to have been specially marked out from early days for the coming together of a superior class of men who, disdaining to air their political views at the various mug-houses round the Town, sought in news gossip and "high play" the less boisterous excitements of a life of pleasure. Whereas the Haymarket abounded with taverns and "night-houses" of sorts, and was always congested with hay-carts, its western parallel harboured but one convivial haunt in the accepted sense, and some half-dozen select coffee-houses, which, for the sake of

distinctiveness to those of the City, became in due course fashionable chocolate-houses. Perhaps it will be as well if we here dispose of the Thatched House Tavern, the nucleus of the Thatched House Club.

Commanding a close view of St. James's Palace, this homely structure, as the direct result of the transference of the Court to its vicinity after the destruction by fire of Whitehall Palace during the reign of William and Mary, enjoyed the patronage of all the foremost men of the time, and merited just renown for its public and private dinners. Demolished in the year 1814, it found a fresh location on the site of the present Conservative Club (No. 74), to build which the new tavern had to be effaced, whereupon the Thatched House Club arose as a separate entity on its south side (No. 86) in 1845. It is a known fact that the juxtaposition of these club houses so much like each other often causes a stranger having occasion to visit either of them to stray into the wrong one.

The introduction of chocolate into this country, five years after that of coffee at the Rosee's Head (the George and Vulture) in St. Michael's Alley, Cornhill, gave a remarkable fillip to the prosperity of the established gossip and news centres round the West End. The earliest account of its importation occurs in the *Public Advertiser* for June 16–22, 1657. At a Frenchman's house in Queen's Head Alley, Bishopsgate, readers were informed there could be obtained "an excellent West India drink called Chocolate, ready at any time, and also unmade at reasonable rates." The consequences of this intelligence were very far-reaching. Ever alive to the enticement of something new and strange, fashionable folk flocked Citywards for a sampling of chocolate which, "unmade," they also bore off with them for home consumption. Recommended by Madame de Sévigné

in her letters and highly extolled in conversational circles, chocolate came to be regarded with signal favour, at first as a panacea for all human ills and later as an alternative to coffee. At once the coffee-house keepers of St. James's put on their thinking-caps and took measures to profit by the fresh craze. Whatever his patronymic or familiar forename—the usual distinguishing designation for such resorts—may have been, one of them, more astute than the rest, displayed over the entrance a pictorial sign, The Cocoa Tree.

Ranking second in the order of establishment (1746) to White's, the Cocoa Tree Club (No. 64) shares with the Thatched House Club the singularity of perpetuating for all time the titular description of a public signboard. Elsewhere all the time-honoured clubs of St. James's Street resemble the Old London coffee-houses in that they are still known by the names of their founders or original proprietors, and—like the generality of modern club houses—betray no outward manifestation of their character. For this reason the average Londoner, country sightseer, or Colonial visitor sauntering along the classic thoroughfare, though provided with a guide-book, would find himself at a loss to pick out any of those social institutions that may occur to him from his stores of reading. On the other hand, the West End chocolate-houses assumed all the characteristics of a club long before even White's or the Cocoa Tree tacked the differentiating term on the generic description of the *locale*. While most of the City coffee-houses, too, had their clubs composed of select coteries attached to kindred professions, they met only once or twice a week in a separate room, and never interfered with the casual dropper-in, who, by paying a penny at the stairs head, was free to drink, smoke, read the news-sheets, and chat as long as he pleased. Among habitués, drawn wholly

from men of leisure, a marked distinction came to be evolved. Directly the chocolate-house—in itself a variant of the coffee-house—had attracted sufficient patrons of good repute in the social, political, or sporting world, their common interests dictated some kind of purchasing power in the form of a subscription calculated to warn off ordinary men-about-town who might prove undesirables, yet who could not otherwise be refused admission at all times. In this way the selection of members by nomination and general acceptance, and the consequent exclusiveness of a West End club, had their beginnings. Moreover, man's natural propensity for gambling, never countenanced at a public resort in the City of London or farther afield—let us say, in "The Joyous Neighbourhood of Covent Garden"—found full scope. Hence it is not surprising to read of fortunes lost and won in a single night behind closed doors in St. James's.

All things considered, we cannot conceive the possibility of doing more than to skim the fascinating subject upon which we have embarked in this chapter. Unquestionably the oldest, White's Club (Nos. 37 and 38), had become a recognized social centre even in its chocolate-house days. Down to the reign of William IV it figured as the leading Tory club, in contradistinction to Brooks's, which was that of the Whigs. At both these clubs, as at every other, the real object of membership resolved itself into betting and gaming. At White's in particular the slightest difference of opinion ended in a bet, which was duly recorded in a book kept on the hall table. According to an oft-told tale, once a man dropped down dead at the door and was carried in; the club immediately made bets whether he was dead or only in a fit, and when they were about to bleed him the wagerers for his death interposed, saying it would affect the fair-

ness of the bet. This betting-book, the entries in which date back to the year 1700, yields much curious reading, not always couched in polite language. As to the gaming, General Scott, the father-in-law of George Canning, was able to bestow upon his daughter Joanna the very handsome marriage dowry of £100,000, or just half of his winnings at White's. By making it his virtual home, Beau Brummell, the acknowledged arbiter on all matters of man's attire for upwards of twenty years, to whom the senior partner of Drummond's Bank one night lost £20,000, gave to White's Club the *cachet* of superiority.

Equally celebrated for "high play" was Brooks's Club (No. 60). Founded in Pall Mall in the year 1764 by James Macall, a cute Scotsman who had been proprietor of the Thatched House Tavern and changed his name to Almack, this club assumed its present title only a short time before one Brooks, a wine merchant and money-lender, caused the existing premises in St. James's Street to be built for him in 1778. Here, we learn from Captain Gronow's *Reminiscences*, Lord Carlisle and Charles James Fox lost immense sums at faro and macco. No. 21 of the original rules forbade any gaming "in the eating-room, except tossing up for reckonings, on penalty of paying the whole bill of the members present." Brooks is said to have died poor through making liberal advances to unlucky players who could not discharge their obligations.

Of that notorious early nineteenth-century gambling haunt, Crockford's Club, everyone has heard. Originally a wholesale fishmonger in Fish Street Hill, City, Benjamin Crockford had made much money by somewhat doubtful enterprises in the West End, and finally took over what bore the style of "Watier's Club," a gaming-house established by the *chef* of the Prince

Regent at No. 18, Piccadilly. This venture proving eminently successful, for being a master of tactful management he always benefited from the high stakes won at hazard by his patrons, he became a millionaire and built a magnificent house in St. James's Street, the like of which had never been approached by any similar edifice. Retiring from it in 1840, he died four years later. After undergoing various changes of usage Crockford's Club House (No. 50) has reverted to its original character, albeit minus the "high play," as the Devonshire Club.

Another aforetime gaming centre in the same fine thoroughfare was Arthur's Club (No. 69), so called after its founder, who had been connected with White's and passed away within a year after launching it upon its prosperous career at the accession of George III. Established mainly for country gentlemen of rank and political power, Boodle's Club (No. 28) in Regency days merited the description of "A Nest of Baronets," which that irrepressible wag, Theodore Hook, sought to belittle by styling it "The Loamshire Chop-house." Indeed, so many baronets were numbered among its members that it was said if anyone called out "Where is Sir John?" or "Sir John, you are wanted!" half the company would respond to the inquiry. At Boodle's, too, gaming was the ruling passion, and heavy bets were at all times made on a prize fight of outstanding public interest.

After a privileged survey of the interiors of one or two of the foregoing club houses an enthusiastic sightseer would probably appreciate still more the entrancing surroundings of the "Old Boys," who are members of Pratt's Club, No. 14, Park Place, towards the foot of St. James's Street. Down to the minutest detail the appointments bear out the inscription on the pewter beer-pots—"Pratt's, 1841"—indicating the time of its

formation. As a relic of the old kitchen clubs, where the midnight fire roared up the chimney throughout the year and the aged servant toasted cheese and fried bacon and devilled kidneys for supper close at hand, this cannot be matched anywhere in Clubland. All over the house may be seen show-cases of stuffed birds and fish, recalling the recreative pursuits of the original members. In addition to his own pewter each "Old Boy" has his briar, which is religiously returned to its proper notch in the pipe-rack when done with.

If Pratt's Club bespeaks the early Victorian period, the Nineteen Hundred Club, lately removed from Pickering Place to No. 2, College Mews, St. James's, carries us back at once to the Georgian era. Wainscoted walls, heavy oak furniture, pewter dishes, drinking-goblets, and long clay pipes meet one's view, while to complete the picture the steward disports himself in a "square cut" with frills, silk stockings, buckled shoes, lace stock, and a powdered wig. Likely enough cuckoo clocks found their way into England after the Hanoverian Succession ; at all events the Nineteen Hundred Club possesses a specimen so regulated as to warn a speaker when he has reached his time-limit.

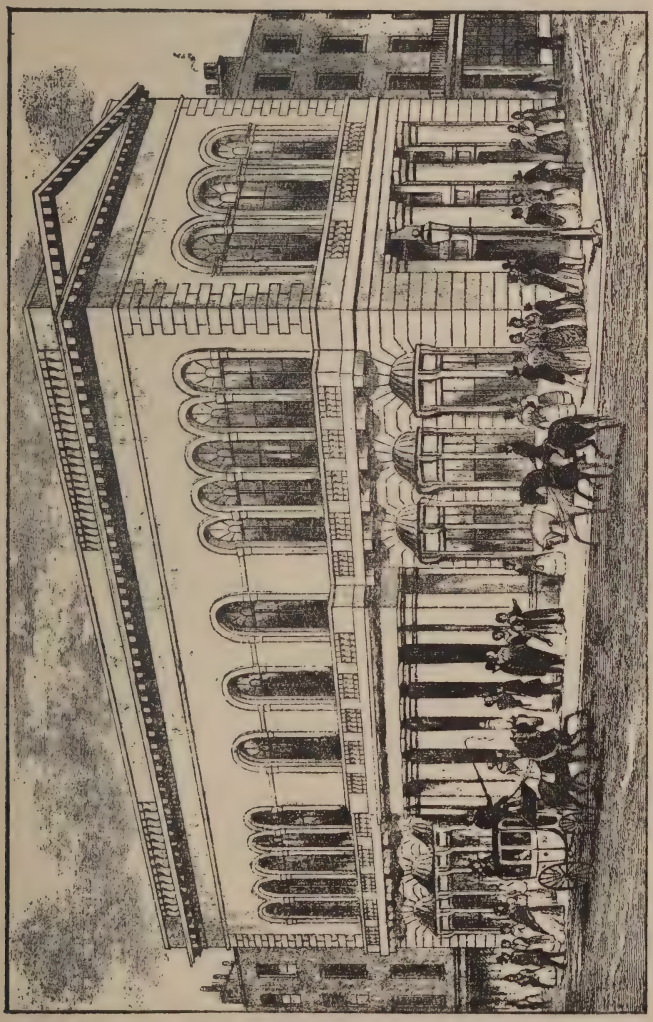
Quite unsuspected by strangers passing by it, Pickering Place, with a sundial in the centre, is a perfectly delightful little precinct, a genuine bit of eighteenth-century London. Overlooking this sequestered retreat are the parlour windows of Messrs. Berry Brothers & Co., the old-established wine merchants, alongside the narrow passage between Nos. 3 and 4, whose Queen-Anne-fronted shop, like that of Lock, the hatter, and, until a few years ago, of Hobay, the bootmaker, lends a distinctive character to the south-east portion of St. James's Street. Their cellars stretch far beneath the roadway, and one spot retains the name of "Napoleon's

Corner," which Louis Napoleon, when residing in King Street during his exile, always affected. At the rear of the wine-shop will be found the old weighing scales with "The Coffee Mill" device—the firm's original sign—upon it, and four bulky volumes containing the signatures to the weights of eminent personages from the year 1765 down to comparatively recent times. These scales had been used for weighing bags of coffee by Mr. Pickering—hence the name of Pickering Place—the founder of the business. In the old days it was customary for men of all ranks to drop into Berry's periodically for a glass of wine and to get weighed. Fashionable women, too, cultivated the habit, and it was no uncommon thing for them to send a carriage or the family coach along afterwards with a bundle made up of every scrap of clothing worn on the occasion, to be placed on the scales separately in order to ascertain the actual net weight of their mortal frames.

It would hardly occur to the average Londoner that St. James's Street once contained a show place. Built by Benjamin Crockford, the opulent owner of the famous club house now occupied by the Devonshire Club, in the year 1832, the great edifice at the south corner of King Street was at first the St. James's Bazaar. This probably met a public want until 1841, when, within a twelvemonth of Crockford's retirement into private life, another lessee exhibited therein three *tableaux* of the funeral of Napoleon Buonaparte, whose remains, at the request of the French Government, had been brought over from the island of St. Helena for interment with much ceremony in the Hôtel des Invalides, Paris. In 1844 No. 10, St. James's Street was used for the exhibition of the decorative works for the new Houses of Parliament.

To enumerate all the successive changes brought about at the conspicuous corner fabric ere it became

Rumpelmayer's Parisian Tea House in the halcyon days before the war, would serve no useful purpose. Play-



THE ST. JAMES'S BAZAAR

goers may recollect that the opening scene of the Drury Lane drama *The Marriages of Mayfair* was laid at Rumpel-

mayer's. After the removal of this fashionable resort to the west side of St. James's Street (Nos. 72 and 73), Crockford's palatial structure formed the temporary premises of Lloyd's Bank and a coachbuilder's showrooms, until to-day we witness its conversion into sumptuously appointed insurance offices.

If only on account of the association therewith of the quondam licensee of the Thatched House Tavern and the original proprietor of Brooks's Club, this chapter would surely be left incomplete without some reference to Willis's Rooms in King Street. Opened by James Macall under the style of Almack's Assembly Rooms on February 12, 1765, this *locale* maintained its renown for subscription dances, Royal balls, fashionable entertainments, and public dinners well into the bygone century. For one of Eve's daughters to enjoy the exclusiveness of Almack's in the merry round of pleasure was a social distinction tantamount to that of having been presented at Court. Within its walls the greatest singers of the day gave concerts, and in 1844 Charles Kemble gave his enthralling Shakespearian readings. When renamed Willis's Rooms in the year 1863, the place took up a fresh lease of prosperity. Among other memorable gatherings was the farewell banquet given to Charles Mathews on January 10, 1870. As a restaurant with private rooms for supper parties, opened twenty-three years later, it achieved considerable success, which, however, was not destined to endure. To the present generation of Londoners Willis's Rooms commend themselves solely as repositories of Art where valuable pictures and antiques may be purchased for the adornment of lordly mansions. It only remains to add a few words on the part that the building played during the Great War. On almost the last of the air-raids a bomb was dropped through the centre of the roof, gutting the

entire fabric. Next morning the front and the other walls stood intact, and the art-dealers' windows betrayed no sign of the catastrophe ; but it was not until January 1921 that the interior received attention and the public auctions were resumed.

# XV

# VICTORIA STREET AND PIMLICO

# XV

## VICTORIA STREET AND PIMLICO

Victoria Station the best-favoured arrival platforms for sight-seeing areas—The once dreary dry mile of Victoria Street—The Prince Consort at Buckingham Palace—Ned Ward and the soberest street in London—Bankrupt tavern-keepers—The Quaker Tavern, Broad Sanctuary—Strutton Ground—The King's Arms—The Grey Coat Hospital—The Green Coat Hospital—The Green Coat Boy Tavern—The Blue Coat Hospital—Christ Church Schools—The Two Brewers, Buckingham Gate—The Queen's Westminster Rifles—"The Million Gardens"—The Rose and Shamrock, Marsham Street—The Queen's Head—The Elephant and Castle, Great Peter Street—The Artillery Arms, Rochester Row—Vincent Square—The St. James's Cinema, Palace Street—The Victoria Palace of Varieties—The Duke of York—The Windsor Castle—The Grosvenor Basin Tavern, Wilton Street—Vestiges of a peaceful hamlet—The Nottingham Castle, Little Chester Street—Pimlico pies—Vauxhall Bridge Road taverns—Bygone pleasure haunts.

JUDGED from the standpoint of their topographical importance, the surroundings of Victoria Railway Station leave those of Waterloo, Paddington, Marylebone, Euston, St. Pancras, and King's Cross very far behind. Not merely do they present all the usual excitements of passenger traffic, but they are instinct with sundry other activities. This may be reasoned out in various ways. First and foremost, Victoria lies on the direct route from Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament to Hyde Park, Bayswater, and Kilburn. Other features of public interest in the bustling little district are the Westminster Roman Catholic Cathedral—an altogether unique example of Byzantine architecture in this country—a mammoth millinery emporium, three cinemas, an up-to-date variety theatre, clubs, restaurants, taverns, eating-houses, attractive shops, and a clock tower forming the converging point of vehicular communication with every part of the Metropolis.

Like the great railway terminus of the South-Eastern counties, not to speak of the Underground, Victoria Street, when cut across Tothill Fields, was named in honour of the young Queen who took up her residence at the neighbouring Buckingham Palace on July 13, 1837, shortly after her accession to the Throne. Despite the guide-books' praise of its stateliness, it is a fact that for a great number of years a more depressing main thoroughfare of tall buildings unrelieved by a single shop could nowhere have been found. With but small success at last did the directors of the Army and Navy Co-operative Stores, just half-way up, strive to break the monotony of uniform frontages by making a generous window display of women's wear on either hand of their one and only entrance. Such glimpses of Fashions Fair remote from other Marts of Commerce must have left ordinary pedestrians cold until the march of modern progress brought about the conversion of the greater part of Victoria Street into shop premises. Even now, in the whole stretch of a mile between Abbey House (formerly the Westminster Palace Hotel) and the Vauxhall Bridge Road Clock Tower, only one tavern—the Albert—asserts itself more or less conspicuously to passers-by. This association with the Prince Consort, whose happy home-life at Buckingham Palace extended for over twenty years from the date of his marriage on February 10, 1840, strikes us as peculiarly fitting. Elsewhere, various concrete memorials of " Albert the Good " exist, but among " houses of call " named after him the Victoria Street example may have been the very first.

Mention of Westminster's " dry mile " always calls to mind the statement of Ned Ward in *The London Spy* (1703) that the Prescott Street of his time was one of the soberest in London, several successive landlords of its

only public-house, The Green Monster, having failed through bad business, because forty or fifty other houses had to be passed from either end before it could be reached. Small wonder that the topers of a hard-drinking age studiously avoided so inhospitable a street! To-day the great number of intervening premises in our most important thoroughfares which yield to pedestrians no alcoholic refreshment scarcely arouses comment.

An altogether inconceivable signboard for a convivial haunt would be that embellished with the counterfeit presentment of a member of the Society of Friends. Such an one is nevertheless on record. It graced the frontage of an antiquated Broad Sanctuary tavern, which was demolished early in the nineteenth century for the extension of a market-place, the ground being afterwards cleared for the erection of a Sessions House and other public buildings embraced in the Westminster Guildhall. An entry in Pepys's *Diary* under date August 3, 1660, refers to his dining at an " Ordinary " styled the Quaker. When Tull, the last licensee of this house, opened a new tavern of like designation in Clerkenwell, he set up at its portal the sign and the twisted pillars decorated with vine-leaves brought away from the original.

Modern and staid as Victoria Street is, it affords a stranger no hint of ancient foundations off the beaten track. Attracted by the bustling life of Strutton Ground, with its small shops, market stalls, the Army and Navy Cinema, and a well-patronized tavern, the King's Arms (better known as Grafton's), where hot soups, luncheons, and varied food snacks are served in all the bars, he might, after edging his way through it, express some astonishment on beholding the Grey Coat Hospital. Two circular plaques beside the chief entrance affirm this institution to have been " founded by

Citizens of Westminster, A.D. 1693, and incorporated by Charter of Queen Anne, A.D. 1706." The records show that in the year 1727 it was in so flourishing a condition as to provide for the education and maintenance of eighty boys and fifty girls ; while in 1739 a mathematical school was added and a duly qualified master engaged to instruct the boys in navigation for sea service. Extending a considerable distance along Greycoat Place and down Horseferry Road, the quaint old building still does useful work under the style of the Grey Coat Hospital Girls' Day School.

Of the Green Coat Hospital, founded by Charles I in the year 1633 for the relief of poor fatherless children of the parish of St. Margaret, Westminster, and rebuilt in 1700 at the sole cost of the famous Dr. Busby, headmaster of Westminster School, almost opposite, not a trace now remains, the entire block of buildings having been absorbed by the dispatch departments of the Army and Navy Stores. The saloon of the near-by Green Coat Boy Tavern contains views of Old Westminster and a small painting of the Charity Schoolboy " in his habit as he lived."

Back again through either Strutton Ground or Artillery Row, across Victoria Street, and down Buckingham Gate, the interested stranger would find it hard to repress an exclamation of surprise on surveying the Blue Coat School (instituted 1688, rebuilt 1709), the rear wall of which, abutting on Brewers' Green, presents a life-sized fresco of a Blue Coat Boy in such warm colours as if the artist had but lately been at work upon it. Adjoining this ancient fabric, and likewise facing Caxton Street, are the modern Christ Church Schools.

Brewers' Green, by the way, now sadly reduced in dimensions, derived its name from the adjacent tavern, the Two Brewers, which, prior to the rebuilding in 1885,

attracted holiday folk to its extensive tea-gardens. A few steps northwards, at Queen's Hall, the headquarters of the Queen's Westminster Rifles, two small pieces of ordnance presented by George III (1792) to the London and Westminster Light Horse Volunteers adorn the entrance.

In olden days Strutton Ground was given up to fruit-growing, chiefly melons, and in its midst stood a noted "House of Entertainment," where, according to an advertisement in the *Weekly Journal* of January 18, 1718, tickets could be purchased for a lottery of silver plate. Curiously enough this public resort came to be known as "The Million Gardens," notwithstanding that its signboard plainly indicated the Melon Gardens.

A few local taverns may now claim our notice. The Rose and Shamrock in Marsham Street is a cosy little haunt with a blue-tiled and rough-cast frontage and public and saloon bars only, the latter giving on to a snug club-room down several steps and containing a "swear box" on the mantelshelf. The Queen's Head, also in Marsham Street, displays the head of Queen Anne on the frosted-glass windows. A novel descriptive feature, possibly in keeping with the age of the "house," is the wording "Retail Entrance" and "Counting House" at the public and saloon-bar approaches. The Elephant and Castle in Great Peter Street is also a very old fabric much used as a luncheon resort. The Artillery Arms Tavern in Rochester Row recalls the ancient practice ground of the London and Westminster Light Horse Artillery, where Vincent Square forms the largest open space of its kind in the Metropolis.

The Westminster Cathedral occupies the site of the Old Tothill Fields Prison, originally a Bridewell. Little enough though its patrons might suspect such an evolution, the St. James's Cinema in Palace Street was con-

structed out of the Chapel of Ease to St. Peter's Church, Eaton Square. Eminently up-to-date is the Victoria Palace of Varieties with its great dome surmounted by the gilt figure of a dancing girl. Alone among London's multitudinous legitimate and variety theatres, the stage-door in this instance is labelled "Artistes' Entrance." Evolved out of an early Victorian "Free-and-Easy," known as "Moy's," the predecessor of this luxurious structure bore the style of the Royal Standard Music Hall.

Adjoining is the Duke of York Tavern, so called after Frederick, the second son of George III, whose claim to the honour of having a column set up at the foot of Waterloo Place by public subscription and the allocation of a day's pay from every soldier in the British Army the guide-books omit to explain. To his genius as Field-Marshal and Commander-in-Chief is due the efficiency of our land forces, which, before his time, had been suffered to lapse into a deplorable condition. Yet, though such a strict disciplinarian, he was so solicitous for the comforts and well-being of the men that they, one and all, spoke of him as "The Soldier's Friend." Married to the Princess Augusta of Prussia in the year 1792, he died on January 5, 1827. A similar recognition of his life-work seems to have suggested the change of title from the Trafalgar to the Duke of York's Theatre in St. Martin's Lane. The Windsor Castle at the opposite corner struck a novel note during the war by employing a lady billiard-marker.

Although its trading activities are confined to one side, Wilton Road is at all times a busy thoroughfare. The Wilton Hotel and Parnell's Millinery Mart, with two arcades, and the Biograph Theatre, extend rearwards into Vauxhall Bridge Road. So, too, will the palatial new Grosvenor Cinema and a luxurious tea-house when

the builders have ceased work upon them. For a proper understanding of that peculiar tavern sign the Grosvenor Basin, we must hark back to the days when the Tyburn was an open stream from its source in St. John's Wood, meandering down Marylebone Lane under Oxford Street and Piccadilly and across the Green Park until it formed a huge sheet of water on the site of the Victoria Station yard, with two outlets—one alongside Vauxhall Bridge Road, the other by way of Tothill Fields and the grounds of Westminster Abbey—for emptying itself into the Thames.

The continuation of Wilton Road beyond Gillingham Street would, on minute examination, offer a pleasant surprise to any Londoner who rejoices in the discovery of strange and sudden contrasts. Down a narrow court named Hindon Place, on the left-hand side, will be found rows of peaceful cottages with long front gardens, so completely cut off from the roar of London behind the tall houses of Wilton Road, its crowded pavements, and rattling motor-buses as to suggest a hamlet miles and miles away in the country. A like experience awaits the explorer in New Street Cottages and Gray's Inn Place. Close by, down a court in St. Leonard Street, moreover, is a row of garden-fronted cottages, and at the farther end of Tachbrook Mews a village smithy in full blast.

A few minutes' walk from the great railway station leads us to a region of Mews which, having outlived their original utility, have been turned to serviceable account as garages, but are no less interesting than of yore, since most of them harbour quaint little taverns where the men-servants of the well-to-do seek leisurely communion over pipe and glass. One of these is the Nottingham Castle, in Little Chester Street, off Grosvenor Place. Typical of many others, its only bar is a step beneath the outside

pavement, but, differing from all the rest, the cosy parlour is several steps lower still. Fresh paint and box plants on the window-ledges impart to this secluded rendezvous an aspect of cheeriness which augurs well for the " good cheer " to be enjoyed within. Such wholesome liquors, indeed, are served by its popular host that they instinctively call to mind the celebrated song *Nottingham Ale*, while his home-made pies are as succulent and tasty as those which in days of old were the speciality of the Pimlico " Houses of Entertainment."

Of the taverns along the tramway route to Vauxhall Bridge, the Lord Burleigh, the Royal Pavilion, the Duchess of Clarence, the Lord High Admiral, the White Swan, and the Surprise are about equidistant and all exceedingly well frequented. The last-named sign belongs to the same genus as the Who'd Ha' Thought It ? at Hounslow and at Edmonton, expressing the astonishment of passers-by at the revelation of the true character of a new building long concealed behind a wooden hoarding.

Among Pimlico taverns of bygone celebrity was the Bag o' Nails in the now vanished Arabella Row. According to an old chronicler, the pictorial signboard represented a satyr of the woods and a group of bacchanals. The satyr having been painted black, it was by common consent dubbed the Devil, while the " jolly dogs " under the influence of wine received the collective name of the Bag o' Nails. That this could only have been a slang or corrupted name for the " house " appears evident from the reports of a trial for conspiracy, when one of the witnesses, describing the place, said : " He went into a public-house, the sign of the Devil and Bag o' Nails, for so the gentry called it amongst themselves, though it was the Black Man's Head and Woolpack by Buckingham Gate."

Pimlico was formerly noted for its alfresco resorts. Two of these may still be located, at least by name. So far from indicating a fiery dragon or some other fearsome creature, the sign of the Monster was an easy corruption of the Monastery. "Robert de Heyle," we gather from another record, "in 1368 leased the whole of the Manor of Chelsea to the Abbot and Convent of Westminster for the term of his own life, for which they were to allow him a certain house within the Convent for his residence, to pay him a sum of £20 per annum, to provide him every day with two white loaves, two flagons of convent ale, and once a year a robe of esquire's silk. At this period, or shortly after, the sign of the Monastery may have been set up, to be handed down from generation to generation until the meaning and proper pronunciation were forgotten and it became the Monster." In the days of the old horse omnibuses passengers from the City to Pimlico were always set down at the only convivial haunt which all London round bore this designation.

What is now simply the Gun was of yore the Gun Tavern and Tea Gardens, with the usual "boxes," arbours, and statuary described as "costume figures." Of considerable extent must have been the grounds attached to the Star and Garter, where Johnson, the equestrian, demonstrated his wondrous ability in horsemanship for the gratification of the Cherokee King while on a visit to England in July 1762. Finally, there was "Jenny's Whim," a specially favoured nineteenth-century resort close to Ebury Bridge, so called from the fantastic manner in which its first landlady caused the gardens of her cake and ale house to be laid out.

# XVI

# THE WESTERN FRINGE

# XVI

## THE WESTERN FRINGE

The Village Blacksmith at Hammersmith—The Windsor Castle Inn, King Street—The Hampshire Hog—Convivial haunts on Broadway—The Clarendon Restaurant—The Hand and Flower, Hammersmith Road—The Three Jolly Gardeners—The Red Cow—The Bell and Anchor Gardens—Literary notabilities at the Doves Tavern—The Boileau Arms, Castlenau—The Red Lion, Barnes—The Ranelagh Club—Jacob Tonson and the Kit-Cat Club—The King's Head Inn, Roehampton—Samuel Richardson at Parson's Green—The King's Arms and the Golden Lion, Fulham—The Jolly Malsters, Walham Green—Shepherd's Bush Green—The Seven Stars, Goldhawk Road—The Travellers' Rest, Askew Road—A measured-distance fascia board at a wayside inn—The Three Pigeons and the Old Red Lion, Brentford—The London Apprentice, Isleworth—The Old Hat, West Ealing—The George and Dragon Inn, Acton—The Crown, Harlesden—The Case is Altered, Harrow Road.

EMINENTLY suggestive of bygone rusticity, the name Hammersmith is a literal interpretation of the Saxon *Hammerschmiede*, blacksmith's forge, implying a village noted for the great number of its smithies. Of the various inns which afterwards arose on this portion of the high road within easy reach of London, the Windsor Castle alone to-day bespeaks an ancient guest-house in the open country. Standing far back from the north side of King Street, it has a paved forecourt, bay windows, and a coachyard now given up to modern usage on either hand, and altogether the aspect is singularly archaic. Moreover, a conspicuous stone tablet on the frontage proclaims it to have been "Licensed for Public Music pursuant to Act of Parliament of the 25th year of King George the Second." The George Inn, otherwise "Ringwood's," on the Broadway, its near neighbour the Swan Hotel, and

Russell's Wine House, are quite palatial establishments, while the Hampshire Hog at the corner of the lane named after it, which contains an antiquated mansion occupied by the Hampshire House Club, also bears evidence of the builder's handiwork upon the fabric. With the exception of the Doves Tavern alongside the river, the like observation applies to the many convivial haunts around the district west of the Broadway. Among the whole number of these the signless Hammersmith Tavern only merits mention on account of its incorporation in the new Palace of Varieties. Out of the "free-and-easies" held in the parlour of the original "house of call" the primitive Hammersmith Music Hall came into being, and thus it happened that the present commodious resort was for so many years able to defy the persistent efforts of the London County Council to wrest an Excise licence from our palaces of pleasure.

The statement that Hammersmith of old possessed a close approximation to a modern tea-house will doubtless occasion surprise. Adorning the menu card of the Clarendon Restaurant is an engraving of a quaint corner edifice with tiny window-panes dating back to the year 1860, out of which the composite establishment, nowadays serving as an important landmark, has developed. For catering in the widest sense of the term there can be no place all London round, except the Holborn Restaurant, to vie with the Clarendon. Architecturally this may be regarded as a felicitous combination of the palatial and domestic styles. The ground floor contains, in addition to the usual drinking bars, a buffet, saloon lounge, American and oyster bars, a grill-room, and a front and rear restaurant, where a capital orchestra is in attendance during lunch and dinner. Overhead are quite recherché apartments for every kind of function —Masonic, public, and private. No less than eleven

Lodges make use of the new Chapter Room. So fully requisitioned, indeed, is all available space that the managerial offices have latterly had to be accommodated in a cottage down Union Court. Electric lifts place the wine-cellars, kitchens, and service rooms in direct communication. The staff ordinarily employed exceeds a hundred, and scarcely an evening passes without signs of festivity at the Clarendon Restaurant. To those not resident in the district who systematically associate Hammersmith with Suburbia, the existence of such a comprehensive rendezvous so far from the West End must be little short of a revelation.

The Hand and Flower and the Three Jolly Gardeners in Hammersmith Road recall familiar tavern signs wheresoever on the outskirts of cities and towns nursery grounds abounded. The Red Cow has stood in the same stretch of thoroughfare towards the Broadway for upwards of two hundred years ; while the Bell and Anchor, with its gardens now built over, was visited by *beaux* and their ladies during the first half of the reign of George III. Old prints of this fashionable resort, more remote from Town than any other, are still extant.

Retracing our steps across the Broadway, a short cut down Mall Road on the south side of King Street leads us direct to the river, and thence, after a few minutes' walk westwards, over a wooden footbridge to a highly interesting tavern endowed with literary associations, the Doves. Throughout the Augustan Age this was the summertide objective by water of the British essayists, poets, and dramatists, and nearer our own time the regular haunt of Leigh Hunt, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Captain Marryat while they resided in the district. Hither, too, came James Thomson, when the days were shortest, to feast his eyes on the frozen Thames and the surrounding country covered with snow. Can we

wonder that such an environment inspired him to the composition of *Winter* beside a roaring fire in the upper rear room of the adjoining cottage, which originally formed part of the Doves Tavern? This, his first work of importance, belongs to the year 1726, the dates of the other seasonal poems being *Summer*, 1727; *Spring*, 1728; and *Autumn*, 1730. Accordingly the now almost undistinguishable inscription, "The Seasons," as the result of daily burnishing, on a brass door-plate of the stuccoed domicile, finds a ready explanation. In itself the Doves is a charming riparian retreat, the acme of cosiness and affording facilities for out-door refreshment down to the water's edge. On Boat Race days Londoners who are fortunate enough to reach it in good time must command an enviable view of the great annual contest. Close to "The Seasons" Cottage, a carved effigy of the species of wild boar that formerly infested the New Forest embellishes the entrance to the Hampshire House Y.W.C.A. Workshops. Noting this, one wonders why a similar representation by way of a sign does not manifest itself at the Hampshire Hog Tavern in King Street.

Superior set meals overlooking the greensward, open house all day, and "Music in the Winter Gardens" each evening characterize the stately Boileau Arms at Castlenau, on the Surrey side of the Thames. Deriving its title from the arms, with the motto *De Tout Mon Cœur*, of a mediæval knight and his stronghold in an old French town, this is well worth making a special journey to visit. As a matter of fact the name of Castlenau embraces the entire long stretch of villas down to the Red Lion at Barnes, where, weather permitting, cabaret concerts take place in the spacious grounds each Thursday and Saturday evening. As of yore, a huge stone lion, painted red, surmounts the rebuilt inn; the interior

is as compact a rendezvous as any chance dropper-in might look for, while a crab-and-lobster bar faces the refreshment tables set out in the front portion of the gardens. Within hail of the Red Lion is the carriage drive to the Ranelagh Club, and a short distance up from the main road opposite, the new Barnes Theatre.

The Ranelagh Clubhouse justly claims to be renowned. Students of English history may call to mind that in his rural retirement at Barnes Manor Sir Francis Walsingham incurred such an enormous expenditure over entertaining Queen Elizabeth and her retinue that he became a ruined man, dying the next year in Seething Lane, City, so poor that his friends had to defray the cost of burying him privately by night. Here, also, when the mansion bore the description of Barn Elms, resided Jacob Tonson, the London bookseller and secretary of the Kit-Cat Club, who had a special room built for the accommodation of the three-quarter length portraits painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller of its thirty-nine members. As some of our readers may be aware, the Upper Flask Tavern at Hampstead, which after purchasing it for his own residence George Steevens, the antiquary, styled Heath House, was merely the summer quarters of the club. Handed down as heirlooms in Tonson's family—he died in 1736—these portraits, like the same number of toasting glasses, each inscribed with a verse or toast to some reigning beauty of the time, must have been dispersed long years ago.

From Barnes to Roehampton is a goodly stride, but a discovery in the High Street would make ample amends for the exertion. Surveying the irregular timbered structure of the King's Head Inn, with a noble elm-tree in the foreground, induces the thought that Greater London cannot boast such another. Said to have stood exactly as now seen ever since the year 1460, it betrays

not the least sign of decay. Nor must the prettily-laid-out tea gardens extending down to the crossways be left out of count. So charming, indeed, is the aspect that American tourists might find their hearts gladdened by making an excursion thereto, after witnessing wonderful tennis displays at Wimbledon.

Recrossing the river at Putney we consider it worthy of reflection that the Duke's Head Tavern in New King's Road, Parson's Green, occupies the site of the house to which Samuel Richardson retired after *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, and *Sir Charles Grandison* had brought him fame and fortune. "Here he was visited," writes a modern biographer, Edward Jesse, "by the most eminent men of the eighteenth century, and he passed his time, surrounded by a coterie of literary ladies, in dwelling incessantly on the merits and success of his own works, and reading aloud the last effusions from his pen. It would be difficult, however, to convey a just idea of the enthusiasm with which every volume of Richardson was hailed in his lifetime—not only in England, but all over Europe; the French were among his most ardent admirers, and both Diderot and Rousseau spoke of his works in the highest terms of praise."

Prior to the setting back and rebuilding of the High Street, Fulham, about forty years ago, it contained an ancient tavern, the King's Arms, where the Great Fire of London was annually commemorated on September 1st by the exhibition of a monster oil-painting of that event and sundry festivities. Local tradition ascribed the origin of the observance to a party of citizens who had lost their homes and, having no employment, wandered out to Fulham collecting hazel-nuts from the hedges, and finally seeking rest over alcoholic stimulants at the King's Arms. Much older was the original of the present-day Golden Lion, in the same thoroughfare.

Appearances did not belie its reputed erection during the reign of Henry VIII, or the assumption that, as a safeguard against possible attack by his enemies, Bishop Bonner (surnamed " Bloody Bonner ") himself owned it and caused two staircases to be built into thick walls and subterranean passages communicating with the Episcopal Palace across the way. The demolition of the fabric in the year 1836 brought to light an Elizabethan pipe behind a wainscot. From this Crofton Croker drew the inference that Shakespeare and his fellow-players must have deigned to the Golden Lion the honour of their visitation ; and he presented a learned disquisition on the subject to the members of the British Archæological Association at Warwick. Nevertheless, there is not a tittle of evidence to show that " The Bard " ever journeyed up the Thames for recreation's own sake, except to the Three Pigeons at Brentford.

The Jolly Malsters—a sign eminently expressive of good cheer—in Vanstone Place, just behind the parish church, Walham Green, claims notice as having the handsomest luncheon-room for a mere malt-liquor house in London. Its appointments, embracing old-gold upholstered settees, a pianoforte, and other parlour accessories, completely put to the blush those of the most pretentious tavern-restaurants. That a full licence could never be obtained for such an advantageously situated and ornately constructed public resort seems surprising. The Who'd Ha' Thought It ? in North End reflects the wondering exclamation of a former licensee at having settled down into the prosaic business of an ale-house keeper after more ambitious pursuits had failed to bring him a competence.

That stately corner resort, the Bush Hotel, once situate amid pleasantly pastoral surroundings, never displayed an ivy bush, but derived its sign from the Green

which it overlooks. A Shepherd's Bush, by the way, was a hillock covered with soft vegetation whereon a shepherd reclined while tending his flocks. As seen from the Tube Station and the Telegraph Tavern opposite, where *saki*, the national drink of Japan, is obtainable, the Bush Hotel, the Shepherd's Bush Empire, and the Palladium and Pavilion Cinematograph Theatres occupying the entire west side of the Green, assert themselves conspicuously by their illuminated frontages after nightfall.

When, long years ago, a retired sea captain became the licensee of the Seven Stars in Goldhawk Road, he put up the amplified sign of the Ship and Seven Stars and gave to his bars the nautical descriptions of "Fo'castle," "Galley," "State Room," and "Saloon." One still hears talk of this arrangement by old habitués. The sign of the Travellers' Rest in Askew Road strikes a true note of welcome to weary wayfarers, and is "on a piece," as the Americans say, with that of the Travellers' Home Tavern at Woolwich.

At the meeting of the ways from Twickenham for Teddington and Hampton Court, the Nelson Inn, a well-known "Royal Stout House," has a large fascia board setting forth the respective distances in miles and yards to Richmond, Kew, Kingston Bridge, and the Palace built by Cardinal Wolsey and presented to his Royal master, King Henry VIII. This doubtless serves motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians as useful information, but since few of them can tell how many yards make a mile, the odd proportions cited in half or quarter miles might be appreciated the more.

The one and only convivial haunt which Shakespeare and his associates are known to have made the goal of up-river excursions was the Three Pigeons at Brentford. Still standing in the High Street, close to

the old Magistrates' Court, and in no wise altered since its licence lapsed during the second year of the war, this is a highly interesting example of an Elizabethan tavern, of which so few, even round the country at large, have been spared to us. Kept by John Lowin, a leading member of Shakespeare's own company, to whose impersonation of Hamlet " The Bard " lent support in the part of the Ghost, the Three Pigeons is mentioned in *The Alchymist*, *The Roaring Girl*, and other comedies of the time. Until a fire created some internal havoc upon it in March 1920, the interesting old place was put to fresh usage as a clothing factory. Thereafter it awaited demolition with the long-mooted removal of the " bottle-neck," but, as we now know, the newly constructed Great West Road leaves Brentford's High Street untouched. Of much greater antiquity is, if it be permitted to stand, that other local haunt, the Old Red Lion Inn, of which the lapsed licence has recently been transferred to a new hotel on the same important line of communication. As proved by the records, Henry VI held a two-day Chapter of the Garter within its walls midway in the fifteenth century, this being the only instance of such a function taking place at a public guest-house. We likewise learn from documentary evidence that during the rebuilding of St. Laurence's Church, towards the close of the eighteenth century, regular church services were conducted at the Old Red Lion by the Rev. Horne Tooke, a celebrated democratic parson of the period. Here, then, we are afforded a further illustration of the historic relation of Church and public-house. The London Apprentice, close to the ferry-steps at Isleworth, is an extremely cosy old tavern much affected by anglers and other riparian holiday-makers.

The Old Hat at West Ealing was down to mid-Victorian days a celebrated " House of Entertainment,"

featuring the usual diversions. In its rebuilt guise the wayside hostelry is quite a handsome structure. For years upon years all attempts to maintain "a shocking bad hat" on the top of the original signpost across the road proved unavailing. Either it was blown away by high winds or brought down and carried off by local "sports" making bets on the achievement. In this way the licensee ran through a large stock of old hats, until he resigned himself to substitute for the real thing a painted beaver hat cut out of tin.

The snug parlour of the George and Dragon Inn, in the High Road, Acton, contains a framed newspaper advertisement of the setting out therefrom of "The Acton Machine" for the Green Man and Still on the Oxford Road every Sunday morning at nine o'clock, commencing May 5, 1764. In the absence of an engraving the precise character of the conveyance must be left to imagination. A newspaper cutting of the year previous, likewise on view, recounts the doleful experience of the then landlord, who, after overtaking a gentlemanly "bilker" four miles up the Uxbridge Road, was robbed of his watch and six guineas by the same adventurer, armed with a horse-pistol.

Although highwaymen may have found the Crown Inn, in the High Street, Harlesden, to be a convenient lurking spot, authentic records of their activities are lacking. In its place we now behold a modern caravanserai presenting an abnormal frontage. This admits of the entire rear portion being divided up into three lounge-like apartments respectively labelled "The Jubilee Retreat," "Ladies' Bar," and "Coffee Room."

Much ink has been shed by polite letter-writers in the public Press concerning the origin of that odd tavern sign, The Case is Altered, which occurs towards the western end of Harrow Road, also at Wealdstone, and in

various parts of the country ; but its true derivation seems to be artlessly missed. Briefly stated : When a practical business man took over a " house " whose previous licensee had allowed his working-class habitués to run up a weekly score, he set a bold front against giving credit, and parried all reminders of the system so long in vogue with the pert answer, " The case is altered! " One can well understand that common talk in mocking tones of the vexatious new regulation incited him to seek the needful authority for the adoption of his stock phrase as a singularly happy sign.

# XVII

# "THE ROAD TO EDGWARE"

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## "THE ROAD TO EDGWARE"

Camelford House, Marble Arch—The site of "Tyburn Tree"—A signless tavern—The Rent Day, Cambridge Street—The Norfolk Arms, Burwood Place—The Connaught Cinema Theatre—"Seeing the world from an arm-chair"—The New Inn—The hop-pole—The King's Head—The Crown—The Coach and Horses—The Red Lion Inn—The Metropolitan Music Hall—"Sketch Prosecutions"—The Running Horse and the Horse and Sacks, Harrow Road—The Gaiety Cinema, Praed Street—The Green Man, Bell Street, a forgotten "house of entertainment"—Curative "eye water" on request—The Hero of Maida Inn—The Warrington Hotel—The Queen's Arms Hotel—The Maida Vale Picture Palace—The Red Lion, Kilburn High Road—The Cock—"Ye Old Bell" and Kilburn Wells—The Volunteer Tavern—The Coopers' Arms—The Victoria Hotel—"The Baron of Beef"—The Grange Cinema—The Hotel Windmill, Cricklewood.

IN this chapter we intend to make a perambulation of the considerable stretch of the King's highway, ever astir with life, from the Marble Arch to Cricklewood.

It may not occur to the most ardent picture-goer that the Marble Arch Pavilion stands on historic ground. Nestling behind a long brick wall at the western extremity of Oxford Street was Camelford House. Built by the second Lord Camelford, a nephew of the Earl of Chatham, this secluded mansion received the mortal remains of its owner after he had been killed in a duel with Captain Best, the deadliest shot in England. Another noted occupant of Camelford House was Warren Hastings. Nearer our own time Prince Leopold of Coburg, the future King of the Belgians, made it his London home, and hither he brought his bride, the Princess Charlotte, only daughter of George IV, concerning whose early death on November 5, 1817, Lord

Byron wrote : " Of sackcloth was thy wedding garment made." The last two residents in succession of Camelford House were respectively Lord Illingdon and Mrs. Baden Powell. Though picture theatres have everywhere absorbed places of public worship and secular resorts, this is the only instance of the kind here adverted to.

From Connaught Place—identified with the site of " Tyburn Tree "—as far as Praed Street along the west side of Edgware Road, but one tavern declares itself. Instead of a sign this conspicuous corner house features the name of a well-beloved host, Chris. Regan, near the roof, albeit a representation of a bishop's mitre on the frosted-glass window of the saloon betrays its licensed designation. Like the Bowyer Arms in Manor Street, Clapham, and sundry other taverns in outlying districts, that denominated The Rent Day, at No. 4, Cambridge Street, was of old a manor house where, as brought home to our minds by Sir David Wilkie's famous picture, the steward of a nobleman's estate—in this case, of the Earl of Craven—dispensed generous hospitality on those great occasions when the tenants paid their rents.

Way down Torrington Mews, in Burwood Place, might be discovered a restful retreat somewhat akin to the Pitt's Head, off Park Lane, viz. the Norfolk Arms. Said to have been established by an East Anglian —hence its sign—this is the accepted rendezvous of the staff, as of patrons who know it, of the Connaught Theatre, adjoining the monster " Funland," immediately opposite in the Edgware Road. Picture-goers of the district will scarcely need to be reminded that the renamed Connaught was the first of the many specially built Pyke Cinematograph Theatres in London, where audiences were invited to " see the world from an arm-

chair" and have served to them free matinée teas for the moderate admission charge of threepence and sixpence. Do we not all recollect the outer aspect of these and humbler exhibitions of the like nature—the white recessed front having a door on either hand of the pay-box and a burly "linkman" in uniform to command the interest of passers-by? Little enough did anyone foresee the marvellous developments of the cinema show which have by now had such a disastrous effect upon footlights attractions!

Although superior taverns are not lacking on the east side of the Edgware Road, they leave a considerable distance to be traversed between them. The New Inn, owned by the Pioneer Catering Company, facing Connaught Place, is an essentially up-to-date luncheon resort. Dickens's Wine House calls attention to its ancient sign by a painted representation of a hop-pole on the summit; the King's Head covers much ground with large box-plants beside its several entrances; the signless Crown, close to the Blue Hall Electric Pavilion, displays carved bunches of grapes on the façade, and the King's Arms the royal arms cut in stone; whereas Messrs. G. Whitehead & Son's equally well-appointed wine-house (No. 276) conveys no public intimation of its licensed title, the Coach and Horses.

Across the way an immense red lion *couchant* is a familiar object over the built-out bars of the centuries-old inn at the corner of Harrow Road. Perchance only those versed in the history of London's palaces of pleasure will be able to recall that the Metropolitan Music Hall once displayed the sign of the White Lion. Evolved out of a "free-and-easy" with suppers as an adjunct to go-as-you-please vocalization, the former Hall of Song always featured a species of two-act extravaganza which enjoyed great popularity until, spurred on by jealous theatrical

managers, a " common informer " made representations to the local magistrate that the performance of stage-plays in a building not licensed by the Lord Chamberlain was an infringement of the law, punishable by a fine or imprisonment. This paved the way for the " Sketch Prosecutions," which aroused positively rancorous feelings between the two professions. Happily, or the reverse, a gracious concession on the part of the theatre managers has had such far-reaching results that, while sketches and playlets are generally tolerated on variety boards, all our new Palaces, Empires and Hippodromes have their stages expressly equipped for pantomime productions and the visits of regular dramatic touring companies. Here surely we witness the trend of opposition rushing to the other extreme!

A short distance down the Harrow Road is the Running Horse, a sign suggestive of the Turf ; also one, the Horse and Sacks, reminiscent of those early days when, antecedent to carriers' carts, pack-horses were the sole means available for the conveyance of merchandise. Incidentally, as bearing out our statement above of places of public worship being converted into amusement resorts, the Gaiety Cinema, distinguished by its Moorish exterior, facing that comfortable hostelry the Westminster Arms, in Praed Street, still contains the baptismal well of the old Paddington Chapel contiguous to rows of billiard tables in the basement.

Though hardly suspected from a superficial survey of the structure, the Green Man, at the corner of Edgware Road and Bell Street, is a place to which pleasant memories cling. On this spot in olden days was the entrance to a suburban " house of entertainment," where music and dancing regularly went forward at eventide. Owing to the indisputable fact that the waters of an ancient well in the foreground, close to the King's

highway, possessed curative properties for sore and weak eyes, the site of the present Green Man remained immune from building encroachments for centuries. Eventually, however, contemporaneous with the growing importance of Marylebone as a residential area, the old pleasure haunt came to be numbered among the things that are no more, and in its place there arose a tavern actually abutting on "The Road to Edgware," right over the well itself. Nevertheless, a clause in the lease of the premises made it obligatory on the part of the licensee to dispense the traditional "eye water" free of charge to all applicants bringing a bottle for the purpose. This arrangement still holds good. We have ourselves inspected the bucket well and carried off a sample of the colourless liquid answering to the formula $Z_nSO_4$. Local report ascribes signal virtues to the Green Man "eye water." Accordingly, in this isolated case a "tavern curiosity" performs a real public service.

Having an ample forecourt with the old coachyard utilized as a garage, the Hero of Maida Inn, like the name of the wide road leading to Kilburn, commemorates the glorious victory of Maida on July 4, 1806. Of the Warrington Hotel, down Warrington Crescent, it may be truly said that a larger and finer saloon does not exist north of the Thames. An ornamental staircase gives access to an equally commodious billiard-room. How such a vast edifice, remote from shops and omnibus traffic, can be made to meet heavy rates and taxes almost passes comprehension. By day there can be but little business. As a nightly rendezvous for residents round about it probably realizes expectations. The Queen's Arms Hotel, at the corner of Maida Vale and Kilburn Park Road, strikes one as a stately structure with a perfectly luxurious saloon lounge and the ancient coachyard

turned over to modern usage. Facing it the Maida Vale Picture Palace occupies a proud position.

In Kilburn High Road there is always life. This finds its reflex in the crowded state of the various convivial haunts during all the hours that the authorities permit them to remain open. Some of these bridge over the centuries ever since "The Road to Edgware" was devoid of private habitations. The Red Lion and the Cock—quite palatial edifices now—display upon their frontages the date of establishment, respectively 1444 and 1486. Close to the first-named, "Ye Olde Bell Inn," set up in the year 1600, retains much of its original aspect. Internally, however, it has been made replete with every factor of comfort. The discovery of a mineral spring on the site of the adjoining railway station gave rise to the laying out of extensive gardens and the signboard notification of a country-side pleasure resort—Kilburn Wells. In process of time this assumed all the importance of a suburban "house of entertainment." To what extent the grounds of "Ye Olde Bell Inn" must have been adapted to the satisfaction of holiday excursionists the following extract from a lengthy announcement in the *Public Advertiser* for July 17, 1733, bears witness: "The house and offices repainted and beautified in the most elegant manner. The whole is now open for the reception of the public, the Great Room being particularly adapted to the use and amusement of the politest companies. Fit either for music, dancing, or entertainments. This happy spot is equally celebrated for its rural situation, extensive prospects, and the acknowledged efficacy of its waters; delightfully situated on the site of the once famous Abbey of Kilburn on the Edgware Road. . . . A plentiful larder is always provided, together with the best of wines and other liquors, breakfast and hot loaves."

To-day, alas! naught but the original wayside hostelry with a new saloon approach in Goldsmith's Place remains to fix the location of Kilburn Wells.

As its sign proclaims, the Volunteer Tavern belongs to the Early Victorian era, and it does not seem, in a structural sense, to have improved with the times. On the other hand, the Coopers' Arms, rebuilt in the mock-antique style, stands out conspicuously as a highly picturesque fabric. The Victoria Hotel and Restaurant, at the corner of Willesden Lane, certainly invites comparison with any similar establishment round the West End. On the side wall of the saloon and buffet entrance may be seen a very fine portrait of the "Sixty Years' Queen." Immediately opposite is a newly opened café with Tudor surroundings bearing the pleasant title of "The Baron of Beef." As if these two resorts did not suffice for the refreshment of the inner man, cooked viands, including chops and steaks, are served in the Winter Garden Café of the adjacent Grange Cinema, to which ordinary passers-by have direct access from the street or through the theatre vestibule by a grand staircase. The Cinema displaced an old grange originally used as a hunting-box by Charles II.

Whoever wishes to witness the complete realization of the Continental Café, with musical adjuncts, would, we think, find his time well spent by taking an omnibus ride to the Hotel Windmill, in the Broadway, Cricklewood. A perfectly luxurious apartment in the new stone-fronted annexe contains Parisian-made cane lounge chairs, glass-top tables, and other appointments to match. A professional pianist is in attendance to enliven the evening hours and accompany anyone who chooses to sing. On special occasions paid artistes and instrumentalists take part in high-class concerts. Refreshments are served by trim waitresses from the saloon bar, and there is never a

lack of solid food. A printed slip on the tables reminds patrons that they need not spend money during the whole time that they may linger in the Café. The avowed aim of the proprietor is that they should regard it rather as a select club. To this end he provides newspapers and illustrated periodicals, writing materials, and takes in letters and telegrams. With such inducements to make the Hotel Windmill their recreative rendezvous the worthy folk of Cricklewood possess advantages hardly ever commandable by dwellers in the County of London.

# XVIII

# MARYLEBONE AND ST. JOHN'S WOOD

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## MARYLEBONE AND ST. JOHN'S WOOD

The vagaries of Local Option—The Shepherdess and Flock—A meandering stream—"Houses of entertainment"—The Rose of Normandy—Marylebone Gardens—Nights of gladness—The Queen's Head and Artichoke—The Jew's Harp—The Yorkshire Stingo—The Apollo Saloon—The first London omnibus—The Marylebone Cricket Club—Joseph Arnold Cave and the Marylebone Theatre—Madame Tussaud's Exhibition—Regent's Park—Hertford Villa and its wonderful clock—St. Dunstan's Home for Blinded Soldiers and Sailors—The Colosseum—The Cyclorama—The Swiss Cottage and the Eyre Arms Assembly Rooms, Finchley Road.

MARYLEBONE has within recent years figured largely in the London Press as furnishing a wondrous illustration of the potentialities of Local Option, which encourages varying licensing arrangements in different parliamentary boroughs. Absurd though this concession in post-war legislation may, on a superficial consideration, appear, Marylebone's stout adherence to its original choice of a relatively early opening and closing of licensed premises, thus seemingly inculcating the benefit of going to bed at ten o'clock, reflects a shrewd wisdom in that the good, easy folk of an enormous residential area can command an additional hour for conviviality by the simple expedient of crossing Oxford Street into the City of Westminster.

Little more than a hundred years ago Marylebone was a peaceful, straggling hamlet amid farms and hayfields, containing few houses save those of humble cottagers who regularly brought their market produce to Covent Garden, and some rustic taverns of picturesque aspect with long wooden horse-troughs and tall signposts, each answering to the description of a "house of entertain-

ment." Pastoral surroundings are still suggested by the sign of the Shepherdess and Flock and the name of the parish church, really St. Mary-at-the-Bourne, denoting its original location beside the Ayebrook, which, rising from a spring in St. John's Wood, flowed through the fields down the Marylebone Lane of to-day, and after joining the Westbourne to become the Twabourne or Tyburn, meandered southwards by way of Brook Street and finally emptied itself into the Grosvenor Basin, an immense sheet of water commemorated by a neighbouring tavern sign in Pimlico.

To this outlying portion of the Metropolis came the toilers, artisans, and tradesmen west of Temple Bar for a week-end holiday, or whenever they felt in a pleasure-seeking mood. Readily accessible from the Oxford Road, and also by a somewhat circuitous route from the City, the several "houses of entertainment" in the Marylebone Fields catered liberally for the needs of cross-country strollers. Perhaps the most celebrated of them all was the Rose of Normandy, a favourite sportsman's haunt, with trap-ball shooting grounds and two bowling-greens at the rear. Built about the year 1650, and mentioned by Pepys, this tavern stood in line with the present High Street. Here John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, concerning whom Lady Mary Wortley Montagu once said, "Some Dukes at Marylebone bowl time away," found a plausible excuse for estranging himself from the fashionable world. At the Rose of Normandy it was where, on the approach of winter each year, he invited his associates to a dinner, and gave this parting toast: "May as many of us as remain unhanged meet here again next season!"

When Pepys visited the wayside tavern under notice it had not attained to the importance of a great public resort. The subsequent laying out of streets between

Piccadilly and the Oxford Road, and the settlement therein of persons of quality, prompted a fresh proprietor to make its grounds appeal to a wider section of the votaries of pleasure. By the year 1735, what then bore the style in contemporary advertisements of the Marylebone Gardens purported to outvie the attractions of Vauxhall Gardens, which had been ceremoniously inaugurated on June 7, 1732. In a large wooden theatre balls, concerts, and ballets with elaborate scenic embellishments took place ; a brilliantly illuminated alfresco orchestra sheltered a band of capable instrumentalists under the baton of the famous Dr. Arne ; firework displays on a scale of unprecedented splendour were provided by Signor Torre ; while thousands of fairy lights converted the old bowling-greens into a scene of enchantment. The admission charge was one shilling, returnable in the form of refreshments before eight o'clock—an hour sufficiently early to create a demand for further drinks irrespective of or as accompaniments to joyous suppers. By the exercise of a little imagination one can picture the gay throng of *beaux* and *belles* in the elegant attire of the period feasting and flirting and laughing and enjoying the music on those nights of gladness, just where that fine wide thoroughfare Devonshire Place stands to-day. There still remain in some of the gardens attached to the houses in Upper Wimpole Street the survivors of many more trees felled by the woodman's axe which, bearing upon them the varicoloured lamps, must have been mute witnesses of the animated spectacle. Alas! such visions of loveliness were destined to be for ever dispelled through the intrusion of pickpockets—amongst them, it is said, of Dick Turpin and his confederates—and the depredations of ruffians who waylaid the revellers on their homeward journey. As time wore on cases of common assault

became so alarmingly frequent that even the maintenance of a private guard by the proprietors proved ineffectual for the security of their patrons. This deplorable state of affairs, concurrently with the dwindling attendances of "the nobility and gentry," heralded the compulsory closing of the Gardens on September 23, 1776. Soon afterwards the estate was cut up and built over, but the tavern remained unaltered on the east side of the High Street. Then, in fact, the Rose of Normandy again assumed its importance as a man's rendezvous for jollity, where at first simple parlour sing-songs and subsequently supper concerts were held down to the establishment of the Marylebone Music Hall, about sixty years ago.

Older still, and much affected by citizens who, during the early part of the nineteenth century, came the long distance beyond the Angel at Islington to be quite in the country for the leisurely enjoyment of its new milk, cream, cakes, buns, and ale in shady bowers and "tea-boxes," was the Queen's Head and Artichoke. As depicted in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for November 1819, this quaint timbered tavern, situate some five hundred yards up the present Albany Road, had a bust of "Good Queen Bess" with the familiar high ruff over the doorway, and a great bay window commanding a view of travellers refreshing themselves at tables disposed about the vernal sward. The odd combination of signs was generally thought to have originated with the first tavern-keeper, a retired gardener in the service of Queen Elizabeth.

Not very far away from the foregoing, viz. a little west of the top of our Portland Place, was another "house of entertainment" bearing the uncommon sign of the Jews' Harp. According to a passage in Ben Jonson's comedy, *The Devil is an Ass*, it would appear that the

ale-house keepers of his time employed a fool seated on a joint-stool to amuse their simple customers by playing on a Jews' harp—not really the primitive schoolboy's instrument known to ourselves, but a *jeu trompe*, or tin trumpet. This rural retreat with umbrageous surroundings had a large upper room reached by an exterior staircase for public dinners and dances ; a semicircular enclosure with ale and tea boxes, each guarded by a painted matchboard soldier ; a special lawn with tables and seats for smokers ; a trap-ball ground, a tennis court, a skittle alley and a quoit ground. The internal appointments exactly hit the unconventional taste of Mr. Arthur Onslow, the Speaker of the House of Commons. On Sunday evenings he would be seen, plainly attired, in the chimney corner taking stock, over pipe and glass, of the humours of tap-room conversation until one day, being recognized by the tavern-keeper while stepping from his gilded coach in Palace Yard, Westminster, he could no longer preserve his *incognito* at the Jews' Harp, and so prudently stayed away.

The modernized Yorkshire Stingo, towards the western extremity of Marylebone Road, will ever be associated with the introduction of the London omnibus. This wayside tavern, too, had its tea gardens which survived well into the Victorian era. In addition to the usual allurements they contained a large wooden saloon for the performance of light musical pieces, devoid of plot or the least dramatic coherence, hardly answering to the description of " stage plays," and therefore not falling under the ban of the Lord Chamberlain. At that time Shakespeare and the " Legitimate " were permissible only at the patent houses—the Theatres Royal, Covent Garden and Drury Lane. New plays commanded liberal patronage at the other theatres of the West End ; while blood-curdling Melodrama—as its name implies,

intensified with music—reigned supreme at the duly licensed minor theatres.

The first established of the "Saloons," but unlike the Eagle, the Britannia, the Effingham, and the Bower, which afterwards threw over the authority of the County magistrates as licensers of music-halls and "houses of entertainment" to become regular theatres, the Apollo Saloon, behind the Yorkshire Stingo, adhered to its original policy of presenting nothing more pretentious than loosely-strung-together interludes, or *burlettas*, as they were styled, each employing the full strength of the company engaged. The frequent descent of the curtain upon these, somewhat resembling the many scenes of a modern revue, marked a long interval, obviously to allow breathing-time for the artistes and a general movement on the part of the audience for "refreshers" at the far end of the saloon. To this order of things we owe the term "Saloon Bar." Here the late Joseph Arnold Cave, the future actor-manager of the Marylebone Theatre, and Harry Glindon, whose character songs *The Literary Dustman* and *Biddy, the Basket Woman*, enjoyed an enduring popularity, made themselves prime favourites. The last-named was also a clever artist in distemper. He rendered valuable assistance by day to Mr. Hornor over painting the *Grand Panorama of London* at the Colosseum in Regent's Park, and, when his voice failed him in later years, became scene-painter at Drury Lane Theatre, but always playing minor parts in the pantomime "opening," otherwise the fairy story leading up to the harlequinade.

The 4th of July 1829 was a red-letter day in the annals of the borough of Marylebone, for then most of the inhabitants turned out to give a hearty send-off to the first London omnibus making its inaugural run to the City from the Yorkshire Stingo. There had, however,

been a much earlier public conveyance, known as " The Paddington Drag," plying the same road which the " Shillibeers " afterwards used, only a little farther westwards. This consisted of a two-horse coach with seats on the roof, and the fares were respectively two and three shillings for inside and outside accommodation. Considering that the Paddington of those days was even a more sequestered village than Marylebone, ordinary Londoners on pleasure bent left so remote an objective to the landscape painters, who revelled in the contemplation of its rose-covered cottages, ivy-mantled old church, and the fine group of elms on the pretty Green as fit subjects for depicting upon canvas or in water-colours. Thus it happened that by the time the " drag " reached Paddington, such holiday-makers as had been fortunate enough to obtain a lift anywhere between the Bank and the City Road were enjoying themselves at one or another of the " houses of entertainment " *en route*, the Yorkshire Stingo being the last and, by reason of its vaudeville show, the most attractive. And, in sooth, the description of the vehicle attested the tediousness of the journey along the miry and uneven highway, and the interminable halts for drinks and taking up and setting down passengers at every stage, the entire distance requiring an hour and three-quarters to accomplish. With the advent of the omnibus, the " Paddington Drag " was seen on the New (or Marylebone) Road no more.

How the idea of the present-day mode of public street locomotion came to George Shillibeer was in this wise. After serving an apprenticeship to a coachbuilder in Long Acre he went to Paris with a view of setting up business there for himself. Fortune favoured him from the very outset. A few months previous to his arrival an enterprising Frenchman, M. Baudry, had established some hot-air baths on the outskirts of Nantes, and in

order to bring him custom caused a kind of hospital ambulance to wait in the heart of the town for the free conveyance of persons tempted to step inside. This novel advertisement may or may not have realized expectations. At all events, it met the discerning eye of M. Lafitte, a well-known banker, who, hastening back to Paris, at once gave Shillibeer an order for two similar conveyances specially adapted to ply the streets in the interests of the general public. Signifying "For All," without distinction of social rank, each had painted upon it the word "Omnibus," and carried eighteen inside passengers, the driver being seated on the top and the conductor riding behind. As was natural, the successful issue of M. Lafitte's experiment gave Shillibeer great hopes of starting a service in his own native city. On the earliest opportunity he sold his business and returned to London. On April 3, 1829, he notified Mr. Thornton, Chairman of the Board of Stamps, his intention of running two omnibuses along the New Road to the Bank of England. Three months later the fruition of his pet scheme made him very happy. Drawn by three bay horses and carrying its full complement of twenty-two passengers at a shilling per head, the setting off of the first "Shillibeer," as the onlookers called it, from the Yorkshire Stingo to the City, created something like a sensation. Within nine months a dozen "Shillibeers" appeared on different routes. The rest of this "strange, eventful history," which culminated in the London General Omnibus Company taking possession of the roads on January 7, 1856, would occupy too much space to chronicle.

In one form or another Marylebone has always been associated with popular outdoor diversions. The Marylebone Fields were really the playing fields of north-west London. Established by Sir Ashton Lever, the Toxophi-

lite Society, which afterwards moved into Regent's Park and is still a "live" institution, dates from the year 1781. Here also was revived the old game of *paille maille*, which was played by Charles II and his courtiers in the Pall Mall of to-day under the name of croquet. The fame of the Marylebone Cricket Club is world-wide. Its original location at the close of the eighteenth century was on the site of Dorset Square. In 1814 Thomas Lord, yielding to pressure put upon him by numerous devotees of the game, recognized the expediency of transferring the ground to that of some hostelry or tavern convenient for serving "refreshers" alike to players and spectators. This requirement the St. John's Wood Tavern, in the road named after it, was found to fulfil, and thither the M.C.C. presently removed. In 1867 the old house gave place to the St. John's Wood Hotel, the licence being held by the resident secretary of the club. The growing importance of the *locale* naturally called for improved catering facilities as time wore on, so that now they leave nothing to desire.

The life-story of that veteran actor the late Joseph Arnold Cave, who died in the Charterhouse, is intimately related to the Marylebone Theatre in Church Street. At nine years of age he appeared as Tom Thumb in a burlesque at a little playhouse called the Pavilion, on the site of which the Marylebone afterwards came to be built. This early debut in the year 1832 gave promise of singular talent as a vocal comedian, with a result that while yet in his teens he secured a long engagement at the Bower Saloon in Stangate, off the Westminster Bridge Road, and later at all the other Saloons, including the Apollo of the Yorkshire Stingo Tea Gardens in Marylebone Road. Like the original Pavilion built in 1821, the Marylebone opened its doors on September 12, 1842, as a penny theatre. In 1854 it was enlarged to

hold two thousand persons and offer scope for elaborate scenic effects on the deepest stage in London. With ripening experience gained in the Saloons, Cave took over the management of the Marylebone Theatre in 1858, signalizing his fresh rôle by producing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Allowing for occasional spells of management elsewhere, in the course of which the theatre was newly designated the Royal Alfred in 1862, he maintained his connection with the Marylebone down to the mid-eighties of the bygone century, there introducing the "early doors" system, and featuring regularly blood-curdling melodrama comparable with that of "The Good Old Brit." in Hoxton. Since then the venerable playhouse has, under its change of title to the West London Theatre, passed through many vicissitudes, to emerge at last as a successful continuous cinema show. It is noteworthy that the operating chamber, constructed of solid concrete blocks, within which the machine projects the films upon a transparent screen, occupies the centre of the deep stage that of old lent itself so admirably to the unfolding of what was justly claimed to be "The Finest Transformation Scene in London" during the pantomime season.

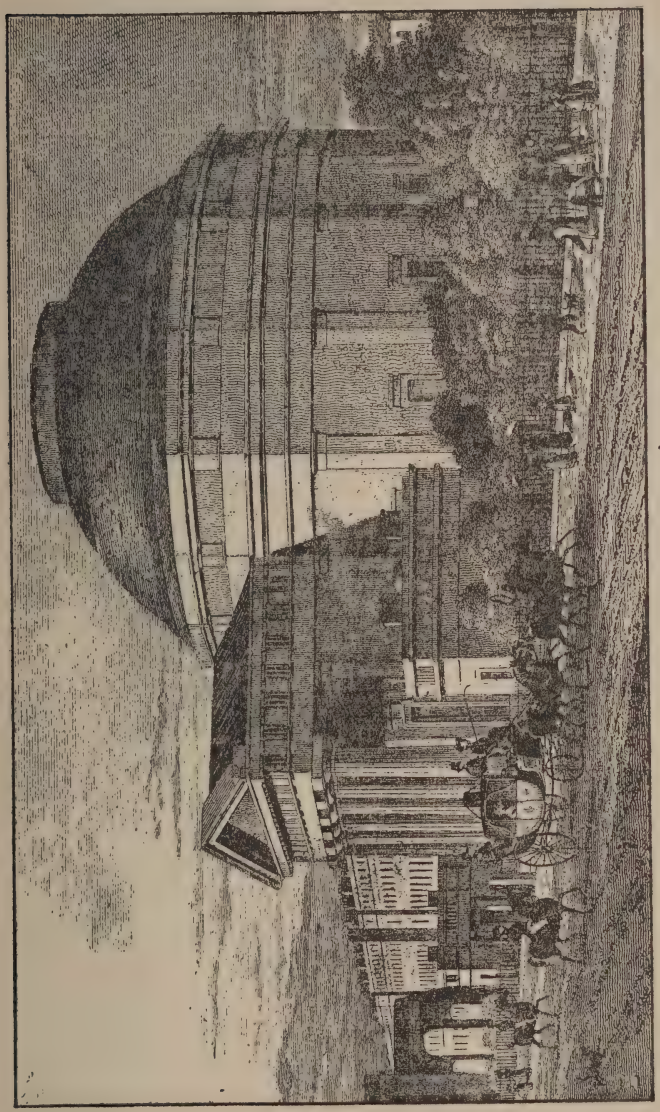
When, on the night of March 18, 1925, news travelled abroad that Madame Tussaud's Exhibition was in flames, innumerable people made for the Marylebone Road to see how the figures would run. From a safe distance they beheld the blazing pile, and at a critical stage of the catastrophe a peculiar swishing sound, as streams of molten wax obeyed the law of gravitation, struck upon their ears. That proclaimed the end of the famous Waxworks Show. To witness the destruction of such a time-honoured institution seemed like parting with an old, familiar friend. Successive generations of country excursionists had accounted Madame Tussaud's as one

of the sights of London, to be bracketed in their itinerary with the Tower, St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, the Houses of Parliament, and Hyde Park. On the other hand, the vast majority of Londoners must be loath to confess that they knew it only by repute.

In the fewest possible words we may perhaps be permitted to trace the history of the renowned show. Of Swiss nationality and born in the year 1760, Madame Marie Gresholtz quite early developed a taste for the art of wax-modelling. When married and settled in Paris she improved upon her maiden occupation of fashioning pretty faces for the milliners' and modistes' show-rooms by executing "speaking likenesses" of historical personages. With much industry she was enabled to establish a small show of her handiwork in 1782. During the French Revolution, happily before the Reign of Terror, she contrived to transfer the whole of her exhibits to England, and, after making a tour of large provincial towns, sought a permanent home at the Lyceum Theatre, London, in 1802. The introduction of gas-lighting at this *locale* by a German inventor in the following year added not a little to the popularity of Madame Tussaud's Exhibition. In 1833 its dearly-beloved foundress removed to Baker Street, where, down to her death in the year 1850, the famous waxworks enjoyed the patronage of the Royal Family and the highest in the land. To expatiate on its enduring attractions until what seems but yesterday would be altogether superfluous. The fact was not sufficiently emphasized at the time that, with a keen eye to the future erection of more suitable premises, Mr. John Tussaud purchased at public auction for a hundred pounds the Grand Staircase of Northumberland House, the old home of the Percys at Charing Cross, and had it stored away for ten years. The removal of Madame

Tussaud's to its commanding site in July 1884 is a well-remembered event. It cannot be otherwise than gratifying to know that the world-famous Exhibition, replete with fresh figures remodelled from the original casts, and many others of up-to-date interest, has again been housed in palatial new premises close to Baker Street Station.

Separated from the Marylebone Fields by a country lane, which in after-years became the New Road, our Regent's Park was anciently a Royal preserve stocked with deer and known as Marylebone Park. The frustration of the bold scheme to continue Regent Street in a perfectly straight line to this domain, as we have seen in a previous chapter, did not deter John Nash from laying out its 450 acres in a manner likewise deserving to be called after his Royal patron. To his genius, both as architect and landscape gardener, Londoners owe the broad, sweeping avenues that intersect the greensward in all directions, the rows of stately trees, the pleasant vistas, " The Ring," or Inner Circle, enclosing the Botanic Gardens and the grounds of the Toxophilite Society, the lake with three suspension bridges, the terraces of fine mansions, and the splendid isolation of several private villas, notably The Holme and St. Dunstan's. Since the war the last-named has been " familiar in men's mouths as household words " on account of its magnificent refuge work for blinded soldiers and sailors. Occupied almost at once by the Marquis of Hertford, it was known as Hertford Villa until his lordship became the happy possessor for the sum of 200 guineas of the wonderful clock which had arrested public attention for a century and a half over the portico of St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, Fleet Street, when the predecessor of the present church was demolished in the year 1830. Though left unmen-



THE COLOSSEUM, REGENT'S PARK

tioned by modern topographers, the wooden giants still hammer out the hours and quarters with clubs upon bells in a lofty recess near the entrance to St. Dunstan's Home.

A long-forgotten show-place on the east side of Regent's Park was the Colosseum. Its permanent attraction took the form of a Grand Panorama of London as far as the eye could reach in an immense circular building with a Greco-Doric frontage designed by Decimus Burton. The preliminaries for this exhibition entailed the labours of nine years. Availing himself of the privilege of sketching the Metropolis as it lay before him from a temporary scaffold over the cross and ball of St. Paul's Cathedral while these crowning ornaments of Wren's masterpiece were being renewed, Mr. Hornor, a land surveyor, furnished the drawings to be afterwards worked out in distemper with a marvellous fidelity to architectural details. Thrown open to the public during the summer of 1829, the Panorama became the talk of London. Every church and well-known building could be picked out, and might have borne the test of telescopic examination. To reach the railed-in gallery at the top of a miniature dome of St. Paul's the visitor had the option of mounting a spiral staircase or making use of an "ascending room"—the earliest example of a lift—inside the central tube that supported the fabric. Nor did this extraordinary illusion constitute the sole lure of the Colosseum. Beneath the panorama floor was a saloon of equal dimensions, divided up into an exhibition of works of art, a conservatory of exotic plants, a refreshment buffet, and a Swiss chalet of several rooms, through the windows of which were seen painted representations in an artificial light of mountain scenery with waterfalls and a beautiful lake. Added to all this the visitor found his steps directed to a spacious annexe backing on to Albany Road, that, styled the Cyclorama, was devoted to

a show of mechanical and pictorial marvels. To the infinite satisfaction of everyone concerned, the Panorama, with only two changes of subject, viz. "London by Night" and "Paris by Night," maintained its popularity for upwards of twenty-five years. This was the more remarkable seeing that in the days before railways London's "floating population," as we understand the term, must have been inconsiderable. After such an unprecedented run of success the attempt to foist upon a long-suffering public yet another Museum of Practical Science with lectures and demonstrations proved disastrous in the extreme. The Colosseum finally closed its doors in 1863, but was suffered to remain standing, empty and forlorn, until a terrace of houses rose on the site twelve years later.

As now seen the Swiss Cottage in Finchley Road has about it nothing whatever suggestive of an Alpine habitation. During the first half of Queen Victoria's reign, when, after the advent of the "Shillibeers" and their kind, it formed an important omnibus terminus, and each week-end brought to the wayside tavern prominent members of "The Fancy" to hold communion with its genial host, Frank Redmond, its chalet-like characteristics were very marked. Himself a veteran of the "Prize Ring," with at least one decisive victory to his credit, this worthy was truly an Admirable Crichton of the sporting world. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to sit behind a yard of clay and over a glass of cognac to discuss "the noble art of self-defence," the merits of horseflesh, the records of jockeys, the points and qualities of dogs, and the individual skill of batsmen, bowlers, and athletes. On all these subjects his judgment was held to be unassailable. When he passed away sportsmen lost their old enthusiasm for a week-end journey to St. John's Wood, and thus the Swiss Cottage,

always recognized as the goal of a holiday jaunt on account of its pleasure grounds and tea-gardens, was of necessity brought into line with more modern suburban landmarks.

Since its licensed designation no longer figures on the omnibuses plying Finchley Road, the survival of that comfortable hostelry, the Eyre Arms, might well be called into question by citizens of ripe age and tenacious memories. Time was when its Assembly Rooms reflected the social amenities of north-west London. In a restricted sense—that is to say, as regards Marylebone and St. John's Wood—the statement admits of rendering in the present tense. During the coaching era passengers halting for refreshments usually mounted to the roof for the magnificent view there obtainable of St. Paul's. Old playbills headed " The Eyre Arms Theatre," and citing such stock pieces as *The Castle Spectre*, *Jane Shore*, and *The Modern Vampire*, indicate the bygone usage to which local assembly-rooms were often put. In these particular productions actors and actresses afterwards known to fame made their first appearance. Nor must we omit to mention the tastefully-laid-out grounds given up to balloon ascents, tight-rope performances, and firework displays as week-end attractions. Here was rehearsed the memorable Tournament for presentation at the Earl of Eglinton's Scottish seat in the year 1831. Shortly afterwards the Assembly Rooms were converted into the Wellington Hall of to-day, which is said to contain the finest dance floor in London. On April 23, 1869, the proprietors of the Eyre Arms Hotel celebrated the tercentenary of " the Poet for all time " with special festivities, embracing also excerpts from his plays and the planting of a Shakespeare Oak on Primrose Hill. We consider it worthy of note that that portion of the once extensive tea-gardens which became a riding school is now a

garage, otherwise a Ford service depôt, described as "Not the Largest in the World, but the Quickest." This transition from horsemanship to mechanical propulsion, almost at the doors of a renowned coaching inn, ably bespeaks the changed times in which we live.

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